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ABSTRACT

This report provides policymakers and advocates with information about the problems homeless families face and outlines short- and long-term solutions. Initial sections provide facts on homelessness in Virginia, an introduction, and an overview. Subsequent sections explore: (1) identification of the homeless and their characteristics; (2) causes of homelessness; (3) Virginia's response to homelessness; and (4) future trends and issues. Appendices provide authorizations and appropriations for the McKinney Act by federal agency, the text of Virginia's Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan, background information on the State Housing Commission and its programs, and descriptions of McKinney Act programs for which Virginia receives funds. It is hoped that the report will help individuals identify programs and funding sources, develop plans to maximize resources, and create initiatives in the areas where they will have the greatest impact. (RH)

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Report on Homeless Families in Virginia

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HOMELESS FAMILIES IN VIRGINIA

A report prepared by

The Department for Children
and
The Council on the Status of Women

November, 1989

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"I'm a number. When I was evicted I was given a court docket number. When I got on Welfare I received another number. Now I'm in a shelter I have a bed number. If my wife and I can get our kids into a hotel someday, we'll have another number, a room number. I have to keep repeating to myself: I have a name. I was born. I have a mother and a father. I am not a number."

Rachel and Her Children
Jonathan Kozol

FACTS ON HOMELESSNESS IN VIRGINIA

THE HOMELESS ARE FAMILIES.

The fastest growing group of homeless are families with young children.

A survey conducted by the Virginia Coalition for the Homeless revealed that 67,794 shelter spaces were occupied during 1988. Of this sheltered population, 44 percent were families with children. An additional 14,000 requests for shelter were denied, largely due to a lack of space. In 1986, approximately 30,000 shelter spaces were occupied. One-third or less than 7,000 of these occupants were women and children.

THE HOMELESS ARE WORKING.

An estimated 45 percent of the homeless sheltered in the Commonwealth are working; 23 percent are working full-time. In Northern Virginia more than 80 percent of the sheltered population are employed. Many of these people are "working poor" families, with one or both parents employed but unable to meet their most basic needs.

Working full-time at minimum wage creates an income of just under $7,000 per year before taxes. At this salary, rent for a two bedroom apartment in the Tidewater or central region of the state consumes between 70-75 percent of the annual gross income. In Northern Virginia, average yearly rent for a two bedroom apartment is $8,400.

For low-income families who have housing, one crisis or one emergency can cause an economic upset that pushes them into homelessness. Once there, the journey back to permanent housing is extremely difficult--or impossible.

HOMELESSNESS HURTS VIRGINIA CHILDREN.

According to national data, approximately half of all homeless children are under six years of age. These youth are spending their critical developmental years without the stability and security of a permanent home.

The Virginia Department of Education estimates that the Commonwealth's homeless school-age population for 1989 is between 11,000 and 12,000. A survey conducted by the Department of Education indicated that nearly 5,000 homeless youth do not attend school on a regular basis. Their families' mobility, lack of transportation, inadequate clothing, and myriad health problems all contribute to the students' sporadic attendance.

Homelessness threatens the future labor force by creating a high-risk group of youth. Without intervention, homeless youth are not likely to develop the skills necessary for gainful employment. One area of intervention is creative and aggressive outreach to enroll and keep these youngsters in school. A recent change in school residency requirements will help, but such action alone is insufficient to ensure these youth access to education.

Homelessness prevents families from functioning self-sufficiently and productively in a state ranked tenth in the nation in per capita personal income.

To alleviate the loss of human capital, and the financial burden of homeless families, a comprehensive approach is needed.

HOMELESSNESS CAN BE REDUCED.

In the short term, resources are needed to respond to the immediate distress of homelessness. Existing emergency shelters are not sufficient to meet the growing demand for shelter space. Expanding available emergency assistance is a critical first step toward helping those who, today, are without homes.

To effectively address the crisis of homelessness, the expansion of transitional shelter is needed. Transitional housing offers families the necessary time to become self-sufficient and to re-establish themselves in the community.

HOMELESSNESS CAN BE PREVENTED.

Primary prevention of homelessness is a cost-effective, pro-active approach to this rapidly growing problem. Many families are at risk of losing their homes due to a financial crisis or an unaffordable rent increase. Helping these families remain in their homes can be achieved through a one time grant assistance program. Such assistance would save the family from the devastating effects of homelessness and save the Commonwealth costs associated with homelessness.

To provide emergency shelter to a family of three for one month costs an estimated $1,500. The Virginia Coalition for the Homeless estimates that a single grant of up to

$1,200 could help a family remain in their own home by temporarily supplementing the family's rent or mortgage payment.

In other states where homeless prevention programs have been implemented, families who received temporary assistance have been able to remain in their homes for the three years after the assistance had been provided. These households demonstrated an ability to meet ongoing rental or mortgage payments once provided help during a temporary setback.

Growing numbers of Virginia's homeless are Virginia's families. A concerted effort by both the public and private sectors is warranted if these families are to live independently and contribute to the well-being of the Commonwealth.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Facts on Homelessness in Virginia

I. Introduction 1

II. Overview 3

III. Who Are the Homeless? 5
  Counting the Homeless - A Look at the National Statistics 7
  Counting the Homeless - A Look at Virginia's Statistics 9
  Homelessness - A Look Beyond the Numbers 10

IV. Why Are Families Homeless? 13
  Family Income 14
  Housing 22
  Family Violence 28
  The Child Welfare System 29

V. Virginia's Response to Homelessness 31
  The McKinney Act Programs 31
  Partnerships in Virginia 45
  Community Support Services 52

VI. What Does the Future Hold? 54

VII. Appendices 58
  A. Authorizations and Appropriations for the McKinney Act by Federal Agency
  B. Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan (CHAP)
  C. Background Information on State Housing Commission and Programs
  D. McKinney Act Program Descriptions for Which Virginia Receives Funds

VIII. Selected Bibliography —

I. INTRODUCTION

Homeless families do not fit the stereotype most people have of homeless people, yet they are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population.

Contrary to common perception, the homeless are not all alcohol and/or drug abusers or the mentally disabled. Increasingly, they are persons who have fallen through holes in the "safety net" and lack the support systems to avoid the tragedy of homelessness.

Though less visible than the "bag lady," homeless families are everywhere. They are in shelters, living in cars, and doubled up with other families. They are in suburban and rural areas, not just in cities.

Even with wide variations in estimates of their numbers, ranging from a low of 350,000 to a high of 3 million nationally, there is no question that their numbers are growing. In Virginia, the number of shelters almost tripled in the last three years. Despite this growth, 15,000 requests for shelter were denied in 1987. Approximately half of the estimated 64,000 homeless people in Virginia are families with children.

The increasing number of homeless children is a particularly disturbing statistic. Though children are thought of as resilient, it is doubtful a child will emerge unscathed from the experience. Homeless children are likely to suffer many psychological, health, and learning problems.

Children who are scarred mentally and physically cannot be expected to become productive, self-sufficient adults. Instead, they may need long term medical or psychiatric care and public financial support. Others may turn to criminal activity to vent their anger and feelings of hopelessness. Obviously, homelessness is not just an issue of the heart; it can also significantly affect Virginia's future.

While the causes of homelessness are diverse and often intertwined, the most significant factor is inadequate income coupled with the lack of decent, affordable housing. Insufficient community-based services exacerbates the problem.

Federal funding for low income housing was cut 82 percent over the last eight years. Initiatives have been taken in Virginia to partially fill the gaps left by federal cuts. State and local governments and private nonprofit organizations have begun to take advantage of the limited funds made available through the federal government. While private groups have traditionally cared for the homeless, newly involved trade and professional organizations have mounted their own efforts of assistance. To a more limited degree, the business sector has become involved. Yet much remains to be done to stem the rising tide of homelessness.

What steps can be taken now? First, the political will must be developed to grapple with this extremely complicated and challenging problem. Support needs to be mustered from every quarter; policy-makers and citizens alike need to become involved in solving this problem.

To mobilize this new constituency, myths about the homeless that are often major barriers to assistance must be dispelled and facts need to be presented. The homeless do not choose to be homeless any more than poor persons choose to be poor.

Second, our social policies and systems must be re-examined and our social infrastructure must be strengthened.

Third, emergency shelters, support services, and transitional housing are needed to address the immediate needs of the homeless. These approaches, however, will be only "band-aid" solutions without permanent housing and long-range planning.

Permanent housing must be the primary focus of those who seek solutions to the problem of homelessness. Strategies must be devised to increase the supply of low income housing and raise the incomes of families to a level at which people can live. Intelligent, public initiatives must be adopted to address the causes of homelessness.

These objectives can be accomplished through a multi-faceted approach. Greater planning and coordination among state agencies and between state and federal government and the public and private sectors can maximize existing resources and direct them to the causes of homelessness.

Once these linkages are developed or strengthened, steps can be taken to ensure that existing subsidized housing is preserved and new affordable housing is financed and built. Other efforts can be expanded to prevent homelessness.

At the same time, advocates in housing and social services can request, and lobby for, federal policies, programs, and funding which will support state and local initiatives.

The Commonwealth of Virginia can take steps to make homelessness a temporary, rather than permanent, condition. Virginia can work toward eliminating homelessness and promoting strong, self-sufficient families who are able to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

II. OVERVIEW

As homelessness has emerged as a major social and economic problem, policymakers and advocates must begin to better understand its underlying causes and work toward solutions.

In this process, it is important to recognize the needs of homeless families. Apart from the trauma of not having a regular home, homeless families are frequently forced to separate to obtain temporary shelter. Many shelters take either women and children or men exclusively. Some will not accept children over a certain age, leaving teenagers to fend for themselves. The strain of being homeless is then coupled with the stress of being separated from loved ones.

Child care is a major problem of homeless families, especially for single parents who are trying to find permanent work, attend school, or obtain housing. Parents who cannot afford to purchase care are unable to interview for a job or attend training.

Homeless children often cannot attend school because of the barriers to admission that arise once a child leaves school. To obtain shelter, they may be forced to leave their school district and are refused admission in the district where they once lived because they no longer reside in the area. They may not be accepted in the new area because they are considered temporary residents or lack documentation of the necessary immunizations. Transportation to school can be a barrier without school bus service across district lines. Further, parents are sometimes reluctant to push for admission for fear their children will be taken from them once their homeless status is known.

Homeless children and their families also suffer from health problems caused by poor nutrition, the lack of sanitary conditions, and exposure to the weather. Children not only suffer from physical illnesses, but from learning problems and, understandably, depression.

Like all homeless people, families have difficulty gaining access to the support services they need, especially when they are required to find and obtain transportation to a variety of different agencies. And, in many cases, the community-based services they need may simply not exist.

It is the premise of this report that all homeless people need housing and that additional support (beyond housing) is essential to many homeless people if they are to attain self-sufficiency. However, it is hoped that in formulating solutions to the problems of homelessness in general, the special needs of homeless families will be taken into consideration.

This report provides policy makers and advocates with information about the problems homeless families face and outlines some of the short and long-term solutions to this pressing problem. It is hoped this report will serve as a resource to help identify current programs and funding sources, develop plans to maximize existing resources, and create new initiatives in the areas where they can have the greatest impact. Further, this report can serve as a tool for strong advocacy efforts on behalf of the homeless.

III. WHO ARE THE HOMELESS?

The homeless are a diverse population in terms of age, race, familial status, and causes of their homelessness. They are a varied group forced to share a common circumstance. The homeless attract public attention, evoke a range of emotions among persons who are not homeless, and remain in desperate need of assistance.

The diversity of the population is reflected in the creation of new terms used to define the causes of homelessness and characteristics of the population. These terms include chronically homeless, transitionally homeless, throwaway youth, street people, car people, boarder babies, and tent city dwellers. Among the subgroups that make up the homeless are the elderly, the mentally ill, veterans, single adults, runaway youth, and families with children. The homeless are citizens and neighbors from rural communities, suburban areas, and the inner cities.

Researchers have observed four types of sheltered families: two-parent families who, with the primary wage earner unemployed, lack financial resources to pay for housing; mothers with young children who flee abusive relationships; mothers who receive Aid to Dependent Children grants and are unable to find housing on their limited income; and mothers who had their first child when they were teenagers. Two groups of children (in addition to runaway youth) that are gaining the attention and concern of advocates for the homeless are youth in foster care and "boarder babies."

Generally, homeless families tend to be headed by a parent under 30 years old and have children under age eight. A significant number of parents have a high school diploma (data ranges from 25-66 percent). The percent of homeless parents with some college education is as high as 37 percent in some communities. Contrary to popular opinion, the majority of homeless families are long-time residents of the area in which they are sheltered.

Definition

The focus of this report is homeless families with children. They account for about 40 percent of the nation's homeless population and represent the fastest growing subgroup. For the purpose of this document, homelessness is defined as:

> being without a regular, adequate, and safe residence, living for any period in an emergency shelter and/or living in any place not designed to be living accommodations for human

beings.[1] Homelessness also means not having any permanent place to store and cook food, wash and change clothes, or store toys. Homelessness means having no place for school children to study or complete homework, having no address to put on job applications and having no phone for prospective employers to call. Homelessness means being stripped of that sense of belonging and security gained from the personal and physical environment of a permanent home.

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[1] An adaptation of Section 103 of The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act.

Counting the Homeless - A Look at the National Statistics

During the past several years, attempts have been made to gain an accurate count of the homeless across the nation. During 1984, the U.S. General Accounting Office and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released reports estimating the population to be between two and three million. In response to this data, the Reagan Administration commissioned a study to be conducted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD's study estimated the total population of homeless to be between 250,000 and 350,000. These figures came under attack from Congress and private sector advocates. Through a Congressional investigation, HUD's study was determined to have severe methodological flaws that subsequently resulted in the low estimate.

In March of 1989, HUD released a second report and acknowledged for the first time that families account for at least 40 percent of the nation's homeless population. Unfortunately, HUD's second attempt to document the homeless population again disappointed advocates. The 1989 report indicated that most shelters surveyed operate at less than 70 percent of capacity. According to other national research, including studies conducted by the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the Legal Aid Society, shelters are operating well above capacity with a majority forced to turn away an increasing number of homeless persons because of a lack of space. One reason for the contradictory data may be that HUD conducted the survey in August 1988 -- a time, because of the warm weather, when the homeless may more likely be living in campgrounds and cars.

Due to the circumstances of the population, it is difficult to obtain precise data about homeless families. Several factors contribute to what advocates consider to be low estimates. Homeless parents may not reveal their situation to poll-takers because they fear government intervention that will separate them from their children. Also, men and women counted as single adults in shelter surveys may actually have children in foster care. In this situation the family unit may not be "homeless," but homelessness has affected the family.

As with national data, there are conflicting estimates on the homeless population in the Commonwealth. In 1987, the Roanoke City Manager's Office released a report that estimated the total homeless population in that city to be less than 200. A survey conducted by the Virginia Department of Education in 1987 estimated that in Roanoke the homeless youth population alone is more than 1,400.

In preparation for this report, a wealth of research has been collected and reviewed. The data in this report was derived from sources, in Virginia and across the nation, who demonstrated expertise in both research and advocacy efforts on behalf of children and families. Data that appeared to be inflated or deflated was avoided and, to the extent possible, the data cited was corroborated by two or more sources. The goal of presenting this information is two-fold: to reduce the time and resources spent in Virginia debating the number of homeless families; and to direct these and other resources to prevention and intervention efforts.

Counting the Homeless - A Look at Virginia's Statistics

According to research from Virginia Commonwealth University (Bromley et al., 1988), there were an estimated 15,000 homeless individuals living in Virginia's eight largest cities (cities with populations of 100,000 or more in 1987). The research projected the Commonwealth's total population of homeless to be about 64,600. The Shelter Provider Survey (a survey of 64 emergency shelters across the Commonwealth) conducted by the Virginia Coalition for the Homeless indicated that more than 67,794 shelter spaces were occupied during 1988. Slightly more than 14,000 requests for shelter were denied, largely due to a lack of space. There were approximately 53,000 instances in which Virginians were provided shelter in 1987, and 20,000 instances in 1986. Clearly, the demand for emergency shelter is rapidly growing. The National Coalition for the Homeless estimates that for every person in a shelter, two more homeless people are on the streets or in some make-shift dwelling.

The Virginia Coalition's 1988 study further indicated that 44 percent of the sheltered population were families with children and 13 percent were children less than five years of age. The Report on Homeless School-Aged Children in Virginia issued by the Department of Education identified 9,800 homeless youth in 1987. According to the report, "these figures are most likely conservative." Although the Department of Education surveyed both school divisions and shelter providers, most of the data in the report was based on shelter provider responses. The Department noted that "school districts seem largely unaware of the numbers of homeless children in their service area, or even enrolled in their schools." Department of Education projections for the homeless youth population for school year 1988-89 were between 11,000-12,000.

Homelessness - A Look Beyond the Numbers

Living in shelters or on the streets can mean living in dangerous and unhealthy environments. The traditional notions of childhood quickly vanish when the lives of homeless children are examined. Families living in shelters or welfare hotels are left vulnerable to crime and violence, because the shelters are often located in high crime areas. Communal living arrangements contribute to higher than average rates of illness among homeless families, as well as depression and mental health problems. Homeless children are also likely candidates for developmental and educational delays.

Amid their volatile environment, homeless parents express the same concern for their children as other parents. Yet, due to their circumstances, they are often too traumatized to provide the support and guidance their children need. In many respects shelter providers must serve as surrogate parents, and the rules and regulations that govern shelters become the rules and regulations that govern children's behavior. This unofficial transfer of parental authority may reduce what may be left of a parent's dignity.

Health Problems

Health problems among some homeless children begin prior to birth because their mothers lack prenatal care. In one study of homeless pregnant women, nearly 40 percent received no prenatalcare -- four times the rate of the-non homeless women in the study area. The infant mortality rate of this group was 16.0 per 1,000 births, compared with the national rate of 10.4 in 1987. Little additional data is available on infant mortality rates among the homeless population. However, there is ample research about the effects of poverty on infant death rates. Because homelessness among families is a manifestation of poverty, health professionals generally agree that high rates of low birth weight and infant mortality exist within the homeless population.

Maintaining a nutritional diet is a problem for all homeless persons and is particularly dangerous for homeless children. According to several studies of young children and infants in shelters, their health problems include inadequate diet, malnutrition, vitamin deficiency, and a high rate of gastrointestinal problems caused by soured formula and bacteria on bottles. Malnutrition has led to higher rates of developmental delays. Homeless children suffer more frequent and more severe illnesses than the general child population. They are twice as likely to suffer chronic health problems, four times as likely to use emergency rooms as a primary source of health care, and half as likely to have been immunized on schedule. Neurological damage, likely caused by lead poisoning from paint in the abandoned buildings in which homeless children often live, has also been identified as a health related concern. In addition, homeless children and their parents are fatigued from literally having no place to sleep.

Medical problems identified among the general homeless population include: hypothermia, asphyxiation from unsafe heating/venting units, peripheral vascular disease such as edema from not being able to elevate their legs, respiratory infections, trauma-related injuries, and parasitic infestation.

Data from the National Health Care for the Homeless Program provides some evidence of problems related to early sexual activity among homeless youth. The research did not differentiate runaway youth from adolescents in homeless families. Among girls ages 13-15, 14 percent were pregnant, compared to one percent among the non-homeless control group. There were similarly high rates of sexually transmitted diseases.

Nationally, about 30 percent of the homeless suffer from some form of mental illness. An estimated 30 to 50 percent of homeless children suffer clinical depression. Almost half experience delays in fine and gross motor development and lags in other developmental milestones. Sleep disorders, speech difficulties, abnormal fears, and aggressive behavior and/or withdrawal are not uncommon problems among homeless children.

Educational Problems

One-half of Virginia's homeless school-age children do not attend school on a regular basis. Residency requirements and guardianship rules were identified as barriers to school attendance. In compliance with federal law, the Virginia State Board of Education adopted changes in these requirements to promote access to education by homeless youth. (See section on McKinney Act Programs.) Other significant barriers to education that have not been addressed are: mobility of parents; delays in immunization; parents' reluctance to admit homelessness for fear their children will be taken away; limited, or no transportation; lack of necessary records to register the child; parents' lack of awareness regarding the change in residency requirements; health problems experienced by homeless youth; and in some cases, responsibility of older siblings to care for younger brothers and sisters while their parents work.

Homeless youth who do manage to get to school do not fare well. It is estimated that 41 percent are failing or failed at least one class, 50 percent had to repeat a grade, and 25 percent need special education. They arrive at school tired and hungry, and demonstrate higher rates of learning disabilities and behavioral problems.

Across the nation and across the Commonwealth, record numbers of families experience periods of homelessness, and for some, the length of time is measured in years. Children in these families grow up knowing only deprivation, instability, and frightening environments. There is little comprehensive information available about what will be needed to repair these young lives.

IV. Why Are Families Homeless?

Just as there is diversity among the homeless, there is diversity among the factors that force families into homelessness. The one common denominator is that they lack a basic ingredient to family well-being and a functional society -- a home. For the purpose of this report, the factors that contribute to homelessness among families are divided into three broad categories:

- Family Income
- Housing
- Family Violence

This report also briefly addresses the relationship between the child welfare system and homelessness. The precipitating factors are not easily placed in any single category. Rather, a family's experience is often a series of circumstances or events that push them further and further from stability. The factors that are described on the following pages are complex, usually interrelated, and rooted in political and social infrastructures.

Family Income

Each day, several thousand Virginia workers prepare and leave for their jobs from a shelter, their car, a tent, a welfare motel, or the streets, and at the end of each work day these are the "homes" to which they return. In the Commonwealth, 45 percent of the homeless population living in emergency shelters are employed; 24 percent work full-time. In Northern Virginia, an estimated 83 percent of the homeless are employed. Nationally, 40 to 60 percent of the homeless work. For these individuals, some of whom are parents, the American work ethic holds no charm. They are working, but are unable to earn sufficient income to meet their housing and other basic human needs.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, housing costs should not exceed 30 percent of a family's total annual income. A family whose income is based on the federal minimum wage ($3.35 per hour) would:

-Spend 70-75 percent of their income on rent for a two bedroom apartment in the central or Tidewater regions of the State;

-Spend 63 percent of their income for rent in Roanoke;

-Incur an annual deficit of $1,400 if they attempted to rent a two-bedroom apartment in Northern Virginia (a one-bedroom apartment would consume 75 percent of the family's income).

Families who pay more than 50 percent of their annual income on housing live dangerously close to homelessness. These families have no opportunity to save money or to prepare for an emergency. Any decrease in monthly income limits their ability to pay the rent or mortgage. The end result is eviction. Thirty-five percent of Virginia's population living in shelters during 1987 were there because of an eviction or foreclosure.

Housing is a commodity that must be paid for in advance of its use, generally at the first of the month. Families can not economize on housing costs as they might with other household expenses. For example, a parent may skip a meal or use less expensive food items to economize, but housing requires ongoing lump sum payments. After expenditures for housing, many poor families have scarce resources for other necessary expenses.

Poor families pay more for consumable items, both in terms of percent of annual income and actual dollars spent, than families with higher incomes. Poor families may rely on more expensive convenience stores commonly located in low-income neighborhoods because they lack transportation to larger, more economical supermarkets. Poor families pay the same sales tax as families with higher incomes. Families in the Commonwealth with incomes at half the federal poverty level must pay state income taxes. Poor families may rely on costly laundromats because they can not afford to purchase a washer or dryer. A single parent working at the minimum wage pays 18 percent of the family's annual income for diapers and formula for one infant. Evidence suggests that poor families live on the brink of homelessness.

Homelessness among families is one of the more dramatic manifestations of poverty. Both situations (homelessness and poverty) are increasingly prevalent. The rising numbers of homeless families are attributable to a decline in family income as a result of:

-A decline in the real value of minimum wage;

-An increase in female-headed households; and

-Inadequate benefit programs.

Decline in Wages

Compensation for work is a family's primary means of meeting its needs and staving off deprivation. In 1990, many families are struggling to maintain themselves on their wages. The inability of families to transcend poverty through employment is tied to a decline in the real value (that which accounts for inflation and other costs of living) in the minimum wage, a decrease in jobs in the manufacturing industry, and an increase in low-paying jobs.

The federal minimum wage, $3.35 per hour, has not been raised since 1980. Full-time employment at this wage generates a gross annual income of about $6,900 -- or almost $3,000 less than the federal poverty level for a family of three ($9,690 in 1988). (The federal minimum wage will be raised in April, 1990.)

There are 17 employment exceptions to the minimum wage. Jobs that are exempt include seasonal farm labor and waitressing. Exempted jobs pay approximately $2.65 per hour in Virginia. While the federal minimum wage has remained constant, the nation has experienced an increase in the number of jobs available in the service sector (a sector which has a high percent of low- and minimum-wage occupations). Almost half of all the service sector occupations projected to create the largest number of jobs during the coming decade are female-dominated occupations.

The combination of a low minimum wage and the increase in minimum-wage jobs has had an adverse effect on families, especially families in which the head of household is under 30 years of age. Families headed by young parents are most vulnerable to shifts in employment due to their status as entry level or new employees. Many employed young heads-of-households are losing ground in their struggle to earn a livable income:

-In 1979, the poverty rate for families headed by a parent under thirty years old was 14 percent; in 1986, the rate of poverty for families headed by a parent under thirty years old was 23 percent;

-In 1979, the average annual income of a family whose head-of-household was 25-29 years of age was $26,676; in 1986, the average income of a family whose head-of-household was 25-29 years of age was $24,400;

-In 1979, the average annual income of a family whose head-of-household was 20-24 years old was $20,000; in 1986, parents 20-24 years old earned an average of $15,107.

The economic recovery of the 1980's has not trickled down. On the contrary, the gap between this nation's wealthiest families and poorest families has expanded. In 1987, the wealthiest 20 percent of the nation's families received 44 percent of the total U.S. family income, while the poorest 40 percent of the families received 15 percent of the total U.S. family income. The national unemployment rate declined between 1981 and 1987, but the national child poverty rate increased. The decline in working families' incomes has pushed more children into poverty and more families precariously close to homelessness.

Unemployment

Data from the Virginia Coalition for the Homeless indicates that 42 percent of Virginia's homeless population living in shelters are homeless as a result of unemployment. The Coalition's survey ranked unemployment as the number one reason for homelessness. Research conducted by the Virginia Department of Planning and Budget also cited underemployment and unemployment as significant factors contributing to homelessness. Unemployment reduces a family's ability to meet ongoing rent or mortgage payments and places the family at risk for eviction or foreclosure and, ultimately, homelessness.

In February, 1989, the Commonwealth's unemployment rate was 4.1 percent. State (or national) unemployment rates, however, are not indicative of the full unemployment picture because the total rate does not reveal discrepancies among races and localities. For example, the unemployment rate for white workers was 3.1 percent, while the unemployment rate for black workers was 8.4 percent (twice the state's overall rate). In the Hampton Roads area, the rate of unemployment was 4.4 percent while the rate of unemployment in Bath County, the highest in the Commonwealth, topped 20 percent.

Two additional factors that are not reflected in national or state unemployment rates are underemployment and actual joblessness. It is estimated that more than 100,000 Virginia workers are employed at part-time jobs because they are unable to find full-time work. The unemployment rate does not reflect "discouraged workers" -- those who have given up looking for work. The jobless rate in the Commonwealth was 5.3 in 1987; current projections for 1989 show the rate declining slightly to 5.0 percent.

Female Headed Households

The decline in family income is also tied to an increase in single female-headed households. Female-headed households account for 23 percent of the nation's families (twice the 1977 percentage). Fifty percent of all children born in the 1980's will spend a portion of their childhood in single female-headed households. In the Commonwealth:

-14 percent of all children lived in a single female-headed household in 1986;

-22.7 percent of all children born in 1987 were born to single mothers. 12.4 percent of all white children and 52 percent of all non-white children were born to single mothers in 1987.

Single female-headed households are more likely to depend on limited resources than two-parent families due to inequitable wages between men and women, inadequate or nonexistent child support payments, and inadequate benefit programs.

Women working full-time earn about 68 cents for every $1.00 earned by men. In service sector occupations, women earn about $100.00 less per week than men. Nationally, the median full-time annual income for women, in 1987, was $16,843; the median annual income for men was $25,844.

In 1987, the U.S. Department of Commerce released a report on child support payments in the United States. The report indicated that:

-Less than half the parents awarded child support receive the full amount;

-Twenty-five percent do not receive any payment;

-Health insurance is included in fewer than 45 percent of the agreements;

-Only 40 percent of poor women are awarded support and fewer than two-thirds of these women receive the full payment;

-Among poor women, the average annual child support payment is $1,380.

In 1988, the Division of Child Support Enforcement, an office within the Virginia Department of Social Services responsible for assisting parents with obtaining delinquent payments, documented a caseload of 245,380. Seventy-five percent of the caseload were also Aid to Dependent Children recipients.

Poverty

Each year the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services updates the income guidelines used to determine the poverty level. These revisions in the guidelines are based on the previous year's Consumer Price Index (CPI).

1988 Poverty Income Guidelines for All States (except Alaska and Hawaii) and the District of Columbia

Family Size	Poverty Guidelines
2	$ 7,730
3	9,690
4	11,650

One in five children in America is growing up poor. Children under 3 years of age are more likely to be poor; they experience a poverty rate of 23.1 percent. In a three year period (1984-87), the poverty rate for young children increased by 6.5, among this nation's youngest children (0-3 years), one in four is poor. These statistics provide further evidence that young families are increasingly unable to adequately support themselves. Even families once considered to be protected from poverty are now on slippery ground. Almost ten percent of families headed by parents with some college education live in poverty.

More than 440,000 families in the Commonwealth have incomes below the poverty level. Within these families there are an estimated 274,000 children. One in five (or 19 percent) of Virginia's children live below the poverty level.

-One in three Black children (35.4%) live in poverty.

-One in four (23.8%) of Virginia's Hispanic children live in poverty.

-Twenty-one percent (83,000) of all children in Virginia, under five years of age, live in poverty.

The Federal "Safety Net"

Families unable to generate a sufficient income often turn to public assistance. The largest federal-to-state programs have their roots in the "New Deal." In the past decade these programs have been termed a "safety net" for families with marginal incomes. Reports in the media and from the federal government indicate that billions of dollars are spent on social welfare programs. It is easy to assume that these dollars are going only to the poor. This assumption supports the notion that the poor are draining public resources.

A closer look at the numbers reveals that social insurance programs account for the largest percentage of federal social welfare programs. Examples of these programs include Social Security Insurance and Medicare, programs which serve the poor as well as families with incomes well above the poverty level. In 1987, 39 percent of households in poverty did not receive any public welfare benefits. The means-tested programs that serve the poorest of families account for about seven percent of the total federal budget. The largest means-tested program for the poor, Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC), accounts for less than one percent of the total federal budget. Families seeking assistance through the AFDC program have quickly discovered that there is no safety net.

The federal government does not require states to adjust the standard for AFDC benefits to inflation and other increases in the cost of living. As a result, nationally, between 1980-1987, benefits fell to approximately 44 percent of the poverty level. The benefits offered to families on AFDC do not come close to the income a family requires to meet its basic needs. For example, the portion of an AFDC grant designated for shelter costs amounts to less than 50 percent of a community's fair market rent. Fewer than one in four AFDC families receives additional assistance through federal housing programs. This, combined with the fact that any earned income is offset by a reduction in AFDC benefits, leaves these families literally without 50 percent of their housing expenses and at great risk of eviction and homelessness. Surveys of sheltered homeless in other states indicate that up to 90 percent of homeless women with children are on AFDC.

Aid to Dependent Children in the Commonwealth

In the Commonwealth, the AFDC program is titled Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), and in 1988, 53,000 families were enrolled in the program. These families included 93,680 children. The average number of children per family is two, a number that refutes stereotypes that ADC families have a greater number of children than non-public assistance families.

Aid to Dependent Children grants vary considerably throughout the Commonwealth. Benefits, in part, are based on three groupings of Virginia localities:

I. In the County of Accomac or the City of Bristol, a family of three may receive a maximum of $265.00 per month;

II. In Albemarle County or Richmond city, a family of three may receive a maximum of $291.00 per month;

III. In Arlington County or the City of Falls Church, a family of three may receive a maximum of $354.00 per month.

The benefits intended to support three people are less than what is needed to support one child. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates the monthly cost of raising a twelve year old in the urban south to be $500.00. The Commonwealth ranks 35th among the states in ADC payments and 27th for all cash assistance for the poor.

Food Stamps

Lower-income families in need of assistance may turn to the food stamp program that nationally serves about 19 million Americans each month. The food stamp program, like ADC, is an insufficient resource. Both President Reagan's Task Force on Food Assistance and The Independent Physicians' Task Force on Hunger in the United States estimated that 10-15 million Americans are eligible for, but do not receive, food stamps. One reason these people do not participate in the program is that, in 1981, the federal government abolished a requirement for states to conduct outreach and educational services to draw eligible families into the program. It subsequently phased out all funding for such efforts.

As of November, 1988, 133,193 households in Virginia received food stamps. The average monthly benefit for a family of four was $290.00, or about .79 cents per meal. The maximum ADC grant combined with the maximum food stamp allowance generates an income of about 74 percent of the federal poverty level. Although all ADC recipients are eligible for food stamps, only 59 percent actually participate in both programs.

Education

Limited education significantly reduces the potential earning power of a head-of-household. Limited education alone is not always a direct cause of homelessness, but lack of education is a factor that impedes self-sufficiency and merits attention within any discussion of homelessness.

Between 17,000-18,000 students drop out of Virginia's schools each year. Young people who drop out rarely have the skills needed to be productive in today's society. They are more likely to be underemployed or unemployed and to become dependent on public assistance. In the nation, only 31 percent of all high school dropouts worked full-time in 1987. On the average, they earned 59 percent less than high school graduates. The decline in the real value of the minimum wage and a lower number of higher paying manufacturing jobs has left the population of dropouts even more vulnerable than in past years:

-In 1973, 28 percent of high school dropouts earned incomes below the poverty level;

-In 1986, 47 percent of all dropouts had incomes below the poverty level.

Housing

Homelessness is, by definition, a housing problem. Much of the research reviewed for this report cites evictions and lack of affordable housing as primary causes of homelessness. Affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families is rapidly decreasing as a result of an increase in the cost of all housing, conversions of low income units to higher priced dwellings, abandonment, and a reduction in federal government housing assistance programs.

Eviction

According to the Virginia Department of Planning and Budget, eviction is the number one reason for homelessness in the Commonwealth. A study conducted by the Virginia Coalition for the Homeless indicates eviction is the second leading cause of homelessness, second to unemployment. Because unemployment and evictions are significantly linked, these two causes of homelessness may actually carry equal weight. Thirty-five percent of the homeless living in Virginia's emergency shelters in 1987 were there as a result of an eviction or foreclosure.

Home Ownership

The cost of home ownership has increased without a comparable increase in family income during the past ten years. The average cost of a starter home in the nation in 1970 was about $23,500; in1987, a starter home cost about $104,500. The average cost of a new home in the Commonwealth in 1987 was approximately $100,000. This excludes Northern Virginia where the average price for a starter home was about $150,000. It is estimated that 38 percent of Virginia's first-time buyers (usually young families) are priced out of the home ownership market. The National Association of Realtors estimates that in 1987, prospective first-time buyers had less than 77 percent of the annual income needed to qualify for a mortgage.

It was once thought that housing would move through a filtering or trickle down process. This theory was based on the anticipation of more affluent families moving to more expensive, suburban homes, thus making older homes available to low-income families in urban areas. The reverse has occurred in recent years. The housing market has filtered up as a result of migration of middle and upper class families back to the city and gentrification of older homes. In other words, singles and young families unable to afford new homes have purchased older, less expensive homes once projected to be available to lower income families. This has reduced the supply of moderately priced housing. The trend has effectively pushed lower income families further away from home ownership.

The increased cost of purchasing a home, migration back to urban areas, and conversion of once moderately priced homes (gentrification) have led to a great expansion in the population of renters. The expansion, in turn, has driven-up rents and has reduced the vacancy rates in some multi-family dwellings.[2] In many cities, middle- and upper-income households now compete for units once in the domain of less financially secure families. Pushed away from home ownership, these families are now being priced out of the renters market. The result is displacement - homelessness.

Displacement

Displacement can result from an unaffordable rent increase, a conversion, abandonment by the landlord, or arson. A family forced to leave its home for any of these reasons will often spend some time doubling or tripling up with relatives or friends. Because relatives and friends are often unable to accommodate an entire family, it is not uncommon for a displaced family to be forced to separate. This temporary solution causes tension and overcrowding, and places the host family at risk for eviction. The displaced family then moves on to a series of make-shift dwellings -- their car or a tent -- and, when available, emergency shelters.

Conversion of low-income units into higher priced units or condominiums can take place in a variety of ways. A landlord/developer may purchase a rundown building, where rent is generally low, and initiate a process of rehabilitating the units. In some situations a landlord may qualify for tax credits as an incentive to convert the units to more expensive dwellings. Rent increases accompany renovations. The original renters are forced to leave because they can no longer afford the converted units. Because relocation assistance is not usually provided, families enter the scarce affordable housing market with the added expense of moving (security deposits, etc.). It is estimated that in Northern Virginia alone, at least 26,000 low-income units have been converted to higher priced rental units or condominiums.

Displacement can also occur when federally subsidized units are converted to higher market units. Owners have the right to forego federal subsidies through early payment of long term mortgages offered under federal housing programs. Early payment allows the owner to raise the rent and forfeit the subsidy, subsequently forcing out the previous low-income occupants. Under just one federal program[3], early mortgage payment could remove more than 15,000 units from Virginia's low income housing stock by 1995. Early payment of other U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Farmers Home Administration loans could deplete Virginia's low-income housing market by thousands more units during the next ten years.

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[2] On a national level, vacancy rates among apartment units are higher than they have been in many years. It is important to keep in mind that these rates include efficiency units and units without adequate plumbing and heating -- units not appropriate for families.

Gentrification is another form of conversion and is generally thought of in terms of single or double family housing. Gentrification can be beneficial to communities because the process upgrades existing housing stock and attracts new businesses to the area. On the down side, gentrification increases tax assessments on homes owned by limited income families and increases rents in the community. The process can also increase the cost of goods and services (e.g., groceries) available in the community because the new businesses cater to the new, more affluent neighbors. The end result is that original residents can no longer afford to live in the neighborhoods where they may have spent a lifetime. Although gentrification is happening throughout the Commonwealth, the process is gaining visibility in Richmond's Church Hill and Alexandria's Alexandria West communities.

Housing for poor families is further complicated by disinvestment and/or abandonment. This process most often occurs in low-income communities where landlords are unable to make a profit on the units. Because the units do not generate sufficient income, the owner cuts back or eliminates maintenance and leaves the occupied building to deteriorate. It is not uncommon for a landlord to then abandon the building, forcing the residents to leave and the local government to deal with the property. Arson follows, in the most serious scenario. Abandonment and arson in depressed communities can lead to displacement for two reasons. The first, and most obvious, is that the buildings are no longer habitable. The second is less obvious, but even more oppressive: they prevent communities (and good faith landlords) from improving the situation while maintaining affordable rents.

Communities with high rates of arson and decay are tagged by lending and insurance institutions as "high-risk." The effect is that building improvement loans and insurance are not available or not accessible because of unaffordable rates. The process is known as redlining, and, although illegal, it continues to be a factor in keeping depressed areas depressed. (An exception in redlined communities may be made for developers wishing to convert the buildings to more expensive units.)

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[3] Section 236 of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development subsidy program.

Reduction in Federal Assistance

Displacement and homelessness due to the shrinking of the low-income housing stock is also directly related to the withdrawal of the federal government from housing programs. Since 1980, federal support for low-income housing has been reduced by more than 75 percent. Cuts in housing programs accounted for almost half of all federal budget reductions between 1980 and 1984. In the fifty years since the federal government first became involved in public housing for low-income families, less than five million subsidized units have been created.

During the 1970's, the federal government played a more active role in housing for low-income and moderate-income families. At that time approximately 200,000 units were created each year, units that were affordable to low- and very low-income families.[4] In 1987, federal government assistance enabled the construction of less than 24,000 new units. (Due to the time between approval of funds and actual construction, some of the new units created in the 1980's were authorized under the Carter administration.) The extreme reduction in the number of new units created each year is a critical factor in homelessness, because up to 500,000 low-income units in the nation are lost each year as a result of conversions or abandonment.

The Commonwealth has lost up to $100 million each year since 1980 due to cuts in federal housing programs.[5] Every year since 1980, 2,500 units have been removed from Virginia's low-income housing stock because of reductions in federal rental assistance and public housing development funds. (These units do not include previously mentioned units lost as a result of owners choosing early payment of federal loans.) In 1986, approximately 80,000 low-income households in Virginia received federal housing assistance. According to Census data, there are more than 260,000 very low-income households in the Commonwealth. It is estimated that the number of very low-income renters exceeds the number of subsidized units by 80 percent. About 29,000 families are on waiting lists for publicly subsidized housing in Virginia.[6] According to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, this figure reflects a small portion of the actual need for assistance. Only a limited number of new applicants are added because the lists are opened for brief periods each year. The reduction in federal funding has left Virginia's local housing authorities unable to produce new units and has crippled efforts to maintain the existing housing stock.

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[4] The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines very low-income households as households with incomes below 50 percent of the median income in a specific area; low-income households are defined as having incomes at 80 percent.

[5] The programs include: Community Development Block Grants; Urban Development Action Grants; Public Housing Operation Subsidies; Rental Rehab and Farmer's Home Administration programs.

[6] The wait is estimated to be two years.

Today, the largest federal housing subsidy program is an entitlement program: the tax deduction by homeowners for mortgage interest and local property tax. It is estimated that in 1988, homeowners saved $38 billion in taxes through this "subsidy." Because this deduction is considered to be a subsidy, households with annual incomes of $50,000 or more receive over half of all federal housing subsidies. These households represent about 17 percent of the total U.S. population.

Other Housing Issues

Among the complex factors that drive up the cost of purchasing a home are the fees assessed against developers and the zoning laws that govern housing type and density. Simply stated, the costs of utility connections and those related to meeting local safety requirements such as sidewalk standards and housing density standards are incurred whether the development is to serve upper or lower income families. Because these costs must be passed on to the occupants, it is not economically feasible for many private sector developers to construct units for low-income families. In addition, the tax reforms of 1986 eliminated many of the incentives for developers to construct units specifically for low income renters. Without incentives and/or subsidies, the private sector cannot make up for the federal government's withdrawal from the housing industry.

Another housing issue of concern is the age and status of Virginia's housing stock. About 100,000 housing units in the Commonwealth lack indoor plumbing. Seventeen percent of the Commonwealth's housing stock was built prior to 1939. Without adequate repair and maintenance, these homes are at risk for decay and eventual removal from the permanent housing stock, further shrinking the number of affordable units.

For many American families, the dream of owning a home has vanished. While the population of renters has increased, there has been and continues to be a simultaneous decrease in affordable housing units. It is not possible to find safe, affordable housing in many cities and rural communities across the Commonwealth and nation. Ironically, housing construction (for certain markets) has been at an all time high in recent years. The American housing market is flooded by some standards. Construction has surpassed the number of families able to purchase housing. The slow growthin purchasing may eventually bring down the price of housing, but this will have little impact on families who are currently homeless or who are in jeopardy of losing their homes. Furthermore, even in a "buyers" market, home ownership is out of reach for low-income working families. The coexistence of a saturated housing market for some and a nonexistent market for others points to the widening gap between socioeconomic classes.

Family Violence

Family violence has been identified as a factor that contributes to homelessness among women and adolescents. It is often the combination of violence and economic factors that leads to displacement.

According to the Office of the United States Attorney General, battering is the single major cause of injury among women. It is estimated that one in every six women is a victim of spouse abuse. Spouse abuse is a cyclical pattern of behavior, as is the displacement of the women and children living in violent homes. Nationally, more than one million women and children flee violent homes each year. When a woman leaves a violent home she may also leave her source of economic support. Economic stability is one reason battered women return to their violent homes.

In Fiscal Year 1988, 15,000 women experiencing some form of abuse requested assistance from the Virginia Department of Social Services. Emergency shelter was provided to 2,882 victims of spouse abuse and their children (a total of 3,518). An additional 2,197 requests for shelter were denied due to lack of space.

Further research is needed to determine the long-term impact of domestic violence on homelessness. It is known that abuse does lead to periods of homelessness. Although some of the women and youth who are victims of family violence may technically have an address, they lack a safe home and must be considered part of the larger population of homeless families.

The Child Welfare System

The child welfare system, generally defined as those agencies that address the issues of child abuse and neglect and foster care, faces unique challenges when attempting to meet the needs of homeless families. These challenges include defining neglect among families whose circumstances may place their children in danger, ensuring positive emancipation among older youth leaving the foster care system, and addressing the placement needs of infants born with substance abuse related problems.

A question recently debated is whether homelessness is evidence of child neglect. Guidelines prepared by the Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators recommend child protective services (CPS) workers not intervene when parents use available resources to the best of their ability, yet remain unable to support their children. Based on these guidelines, homelessness, then, may not be interpreted as child neglect. Although CPS practices vary across the Commonwealth and across the nation, it is difficult to imagine CPS workers not intervening, in some way, in the life of a homeless family if a report of neglect is made. Unfortunately, the primary need of the family may be a need the CPS worker can not address. At an increasing rate, CPS workers are forced to address the issues of family poverty and homelessness, issues the system was not intended to deal with.

While homelessness may not be considered neglect, homelessness may lend itself to conditions constituting neglect. These conditions include a lack of supervision and educational and medical neglect. When confronted with these situations, the child protective services worker may intervene and separate the children from their parents. The separation can trigger a host of other problems that will ultimately prevent reunification. For example, once the child is removed from the family, the family's ADC grant is either reduced or eliminated. This severely limits the possibilities for the parent to address conditions of neglect -- the lack of housing. Additionally, a parent may become ineligible for certain public housing units designated for families. In these examples, a family can become trapped in homelessness because of the requirements of two systems designed to help families, the system of public benefits and the child welfare system.

The foster care system is another area of concern among advocates for the homeless. Subsidies for foster care generally end when the child reaches age 18, unless the child is still in school. Other youth are "emancipated" from the system at younger ages for various reasons. Despite independent living programs, many youth are turned out of the system ill-prepared to support themselves. One study of youth who had been out of foster care for two or more years revealed: one in three lacked a high school diploma; one in three spent their first night of independence on the streets; and 29 percent experienced periods of homelessness and/or frequent moves. There is evidence that some foster children have graduated to homeless adulthood. Among the homeless adults studied, up to 30 percent were in foster care as children. During a time when the average American young adult does not leave his or her parent's home until age 23, it is not surprising that foster children are unable to become self supporting at age 17 or 18.

The combination of substance abuse and AIDS has created another challenge for the child welfare system's response to homelessness. Most notably, the combination has led to a new population of homeless -- boarder babies. These infants, born drug addicted, with AIDS, or both, are being abandoned in hospitals (often because of their parents' own illnesses) to become "boarders" at the hospitals. The obvious question is what does an already burdened system do with these youngsters who will require extensive care? Although there is little comprehensive data to indicate a total number of boarder babies, it is estimated that 375,000 newborns are affected by maternal substance abuse each year, and drug-exposed babies represent approximately 50 percent of the nation's foster care caseload. Because of high rates of drug abuse among homeless teenagers and adults, the problems associated with AIDS and homelessness can be expected to escalate.

All child advocates must be concerned with policies or practices that can potentially add to the ranks of homelessness.

There appears to be a strong interaction between child welfare practices and homelessness. CPS workers may be faced with the possible removal of a child from safe parents who live in an unsafe environment (e.g., the car or the streets). The workers are forced to remedy a situation brought on by a lack of housing, not abuse or neglect. If the child is separated from the parents, the separation may limit the family's potential to obtain housing or benefits, and therefore reduce the family's possibility for reunification. The second area in which homelessness and the child welfare system interact is within the foster care system. Because of problems within the foster care system, some youth find themselves emancipated without the employment and social skills needed to function as an independent adult. These youth are at great risk for homelessness. And finally, the third challenge in regard to homelessness and the child welfare system is drug addiction and AIDS among parents, infants, and children.

V. VIRGINIA'S RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS

The McKinney Act Programs

The Commonwealth of Virginia has begun to address the crisis of homelessness in a number of important ways. One of the most immediate approaches has been to take advantage of federal funding opportunities under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. The McKinney Act offers state and local governments and non-profit organizations funding to feed, shelter, and assist the homeless.

The Act includes nearly twenty different provisions to address the needs of homeless: emergency shelter, food, health care, mental health care, housing, educational programs, job training, and other services.

Signed into law in July 1987, the Act was reauthorized as the Omnibus McKinney Act of 1988 in March of that year. The revised bill contains some provisions to make the administration of certain housing programs more flexible and establishes a mechanism to facilitate the coordination and dissemination of information about McKinney programs. It authorizes $634 million in 1989 and the same amount in 1990. As seen in the chart in Appendix A, "Authorizations and Appropriations for the McKinney Act by Federal Agency," the Act has never been fully funded. However, President Bush's budget proposes full funding for the program in 1990.

Virginia receives funds for many of the McKinney programs. The programs have been directed toward assisting the homeless with housing, mental health and support services, education, and employment. (See Table 1 for descriptions of each of the programs for which Virginia receives funds and a listing of state recipients.)

Designated Coordination Mechanism for McKinney Programs

To ensure that federal aid reaches the homeless, Congress created a high-level oversight council, the Interagency Council for the Homeless, to help program applicants locate the programs that are scattered throughout many federal agencies.

The Council is charged with reviewing all federal homeless activities and monitors, evaluates, and recommends improvements in the programs. It provides technical assistance to state and local governments and private or nonprofit organizations serving the homeless. Finally, the Council collects and disseminates information about the homeless and is required to distribute a bimonthly bulletin on federal resources available

TABLE 1
Distribution of McKinney Funds in Virginia
1987-88

Program Area/Federal Program	Areas Funded	Eligibility	State Program Recipient
HOUSING			
Dept. of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)			
Emergency Shelter Grant Program	Housing renovation, major rehabilitation, or conversion	States, select cities & urban counties, local governments	Dept. of Housing & Community Development with portion of funds awarded to localities on competitive basis
Supplemental Assistance for Facilities Program	Emergency shelter & transitional housing projects	States, metropolitan cities & urban counties, tribes or nonprofit organizations	City of Alexandria
Supportive Housing Demonstration Program	Transitional housing & permanent housing for the handicapped	Same as above	Fairfax County, Alexandria, Roanoke, Virginia Beach
HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, AND SUPPORT SERVICES			
Dept. of Health & Human Services (HHS)			
Mental Health Block Grant Program	Outreach services, mental health treat-	State agency responsible for	Dept. of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance

Program Area/Federal Program	Areas Funded	Eligibility	State Program Recipient
	ment & rehabilitation, case management, medical referral services, supportive & supervisory residential services, & staff training	mental health	Abuse Services (DMHMR& SAS) awarded funds to Alexandria, Arlington, Falls Church-Fairfax, Norfolk, Hampton-Newport News, Richmond, & Roanoke
Community Mental Health Services Demonstration Project	Same as above	Same as above	DMHMR&SAS awarded funds to City of Richmond
Emergency Community Services Homeless Grant Program	Emergency & transitional services, job training, counseling, housing coordination, literacy & adult education training	Community Action Agency Programs (CAAPS) that already provide assistance to homeless	Dept. of Social Services awarded funds to CAAPS Programs on a competitive basis
Health Services	Primary care services, drug & alcohol abuse treatment, & optional mental health services	Public & private nonprofit organizations	Peninsula Institute for City Health (Norfolk) Daily Planet (Richmond)
EDUCATION			
Dept. of Education (DOE)			
Homeless Children & Youth	Plan & implement programs for the education of homeless children	State education agencies	State Dept. of Education (DOE)

Program Area/Federal Program	Areas Funded	Eligibility	State Program Recipient
Adult Education Program	Plan & implement programs of literacy training & basic skills remediation	State education agencies	DOE (awarded funds on competitive basis to a variety of private nonprofit organizations & local governments in both years
EMPLOYMENT			
Department of Labor			
Job Training Demonstration Program	Training in skills development & job preparation	State & local public agencies, private nonprofit organizations, & private businesses	Fairfax County Department of Social Services
FOOD			
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Food for shelters & mass feeding facilities, small equipment, emergency lodging, minor rehabilitation of shelter facilities	Localities w/high unemployment & poverty rates & higher than average levels of fiscal stress(10% of funds set aside for localities with extremely high housing costs)	United Way awarded funds to 69 local boards who distribute monies to local nonprofit & government organizations
Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)	Surplus Food	State agriculture agencies	Dept. of Agriculture distributes to localities

SOURCE: Interagency Council on the Homeless (via Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development) under the McKinney Act to the states. The bulletin provides information about application deadlines and lists contact persons at each federal agency.

The Council has begun to establish a regional network (using existing federal regional offices) to provide technical assistance to the states. The regional network is intended to assist the states in interpreting federal regulations, applying for funds, coordinating with other federal programs, and developing regional solutions to homeless problems.

States are required to designate a contact person to receive and disseminate information from the Council. The Assistant Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development has been designated as Virginia's contact person. Further, states are encouraged to establish interagency councils to coordinate efforts among state and local agencies to exchange information on McKinney programs.

While the goals of the Council are laudable, the Council has had difficulty implementing its objectives. The Wall Street Journal brought criticisms of the Council to light in a recent article. The article resulted from complaints from both state government officials and advocates for the homeless frustrated about problems obtaining basic information about programs and funding in sufficient time to act.

Jack Kemp, the new HUD Secretary, has promised to remedy the situation. Until then, the National Governors' Association (NGA) and the Council of State Community Affairs Agencies appear to be the best sources [illegible] information on McKinney funding for the states.

State Housing Programs

The provision of emergency, supportive, and permanent housing are essential to address the problem of homelessness in the short and long terms. Planning, coordination, and special state initiatives will be required to meet the needs in these areas.

Planning and Coordination. Even with the drawbacks in the design and implementation of the McKinney program, the Act provided an impetus for initial planning and coordinative efforts on the state level.

To receive federal monies for housing from HUD, states, eligible cities, and urban counties must have developed and approved Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plans (CHAPS). CHAPS contain a statement of need, a brief inventory of facilities and services that assist the homeless, strategies that meet the needs of the homeless with available services and recognize special needs, and an explanation of how federal funds will complement and enhance available services.

Virginia has developed a general plan, as have eight localities (Arlington, Fairfax, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Richmond, Roanoke, and Virginia Beach).

The Department of Housing and Community Development has also undertaken a study to explore the development of a statewide coordinating body or information network of the organizations that assist the homeless. (See Administrative Initiatives for more information.)

The Virginia Housing Study Commission (HSC) recommended that planning be facilitated through local planning commissions. The General Assembly adopted a resolution in 1989 that encourages planning district commissions to work with member localities to develop plans to provide for the needs of the homeless in their districts and regionally share the costs of assisting the homeless.

Funding and Program Initiatives. Virginia's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has received funding for three of the four programs offered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These programs include emergency shelter grants, supportive housing demonstration programs, and supplemental assistance for the homeless. A description of these programs and a justification of their need is included in the state plan. (See Appendix B.)

The McKinney programs have been supplemented by funds from the Virginia General Assembly. In 1989, the Legislature appropriated money for shelters and a new Homeless Intervention Demonstration Program. The objective of the intervention program is to prevent evictions and foreclosures that thrust many people into homelessness. The demonstration program will begin in eight localities and will provide housing and job counseling for loan and grant recipients.

Most federal and state funded programs (see Table 2 for listing) are administered by DHCD under an umbrella program called SHARE, the State Homeless Assistance Resources Program. The SHARE program evolved from initial efforts in 1987 to fund shelters for the homeless. In each subsequent year, the General Assembly has appropriated $400,000 a year for emergency shelters.

The General Assembly established the Virginia Partnership Fund in 1988. The $47 million loan fund is designed to address the housing needs of Virginia's poor. Part of these funds, $750,000, was set aside for each year of the biennium for grants to expand homeless facilities. In addition, the Fund included a $2 million loan program for the same purpose.

TABLE 2
MAJOR STATE HOUSING PROGRAMS TO ASSIST THE HOMELESS

Programs Administered by Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development	Program Authorization
STATE HOMELESS HOUSING ASSISTANCE RESOURCES (SHARE) PROGRAM:	
Shelter Support Grant Program	Virginia General Assembly (State Funds)
Federal Shelter Grant Program	McKinney Act (Federal Funds)
Expansion Grant Program	Virginia General Assembly (State Funds)
Expansion Loan Program	Virginia Housing Partnership Fund (VHDA) (State Funds)
HOMELESS INTERVENTION PROGRAM (new)	Virginia General Assembly (State Funds)
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING:	
Permanent Housing for the Handicapped Homeless	McKinney Act (Federal Funds)
Transitional Housing*	McKinney Act (Federal Funds)

*Not administered by Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, but by U.S. Housing and Urban Development.

Other Partnership Fund programs less directly related to helping the homeless include grants to provide emergency home repair and seed money for nonprofit organizations. Loan programs include single and multifamily rehabilitation, congregate housing, and single room occupancy (SRO) and transitional housing programs.

Administrative Initiatives. The Department of Housing and Community Development has several administrative initiatives underway (independent of McKinney programs) to increase the amount of information available to state agencies and housing advocates and facilitate coordination among them.

First, the Department is developing a data base of housing programs serving the homeless in Virginia. The information will include a listing of programs, a description of program services, and types and levels of funding.

Second, the DHCD has completed a survey of government agencies involved in assisting the homeless to assess the level of interest in forming an interagency task force of organizations involved in programs for the homeless. The federal government recommended that state task forces be formed to assist in coordinating services.

Based on the results of the survey, DHCD will make recommendations regarding whether a coordinating body should be formed, and if so, the structure and function of that body.

Preliminary survey results indicate that recipients of McKinney funds and other advocates for the homeless believe that there is a need for better coordination at the state level. A number of service providers expressed frustration regarding attempts to locate services for homeless clients because there is no central source of program information. Many of those surveyed also commented that without a state housing plan and a coordinated effort, federal funding will address only the symptoms of homelessness.

The DHCD is also considering the publication of a directory of current programs available to the homeless in Virginia and a newsletter, in addition to establishing an information network (if not a more formal structure) to disseminate information about grant opportunities. (See Appendix C for background information on this agency and the Housing Study Commission.)

Health, Mental Health, and Support Services

Services to address the health, mental health, and basic living problems of the homeless are needed if this population is to become self-sufficient. The McKinney Act offers funds to state mental health and social services agencies, as well as local public and private nonprofit organizations, to provide some of these services to the homeless.

Health. Two nonprofit organizations have received McKinney funding to provide health services to the homeless -- the Daily Planet in Richmond and the Peninsula Institute of Health in Norfolk. The organizations provide primary care services, drug and alcohol treatment, and mental health services to homeless people in their areas.

Mental Health. The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services (DMHMR & SAS) received federal funds under the Community Mental Health Services demonstration program. The program provides localities with the ability to conduct outreach services, mental health treatment, medical referral, and other services as noted in Table 1.

Support Services. The Department of Social Services (DSS) receives McKinney funds to assist the homeless through local community action agency programs (CAAPS). A shelter program, similar to the one administered by DHCD, provides funds to improve facility and support services for homeless people.

DSS is also applying for funds under a HUD Job Training Demonstration Program to expand and develop job training in CAAPS and in some local departments of social services.

Though federal funds are available for a food outreach program (through the McKinney Act and the Hunger Prevention Act of 1988),DSS has chosen not to participate in the program. This program informs potential applicants that they are eligible and requires that the state submit a plan to the federal government describing proposed outreach efforts. Once approved, the federal government reimburses the state for half of the cost of the program, with the state matching the remaining 50 percent.

Independent of the McKinney program, DSS undertook an internal study of its services to the homeless. Recognizing the need "to identify the extent of the homeless problem for local social service agencies," the Department surveyed its local departments to determine their perception of the problem and what services were available and needed in each locality. Though the results of the survey have not yet been released, preliminary results indicate interest in establishing a work group on homelessness to address issues and coordinate homeless services, and in the appointment of a homeless coordinator.

In addition, DSS plans to conduct a study of the options available under federal regulations to expand the Aid to Dependent Children-Emergency Assistance Program. Special emphasis will be placed upon homelessness prevention and other emergency activities that these funds could support. As instructed by the General Assembly, recommendations about the future direction of the Aid to Dependent Children Program are due to the Governor and the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees by December 1, 1989.

Education

As stated in section III, more than half of the homeless children in Virginia do not attend school on a regular basis. To minimize the negative effects of homelessness on children, efforts should be made to enter and keep these children in school. State residency requirements and guardianship rules stand as barriers in achieving these goals.

School Admissions. The McKinney Act provides state education agencies with grant funds to "carry out policies to ensure that homeless children and youth have access to a free, appropriate public education which would be provided to children of residents of the state and is consistent with state attendance laws."

The basic standard set by the U.S. Department of Education is that homeless individuals should have the same access to elementary and secondary education as children whose parents are established residents of the state. Children no longer need to be residents in the school district to attend school.

To receive funds, the U.S. Department of Education mandated that states review their residency requirements and take steps to revise those laws to ensure that homeless children are afforded free and appropriate public education.

In response to the federal requirement, Virginia's Department of Education (DOE) applied for McKinney funds to establish an office to coordinate educational programs for homeless children, complete a count of the number of homeless children, conduct a needs assessment, and develop a plan to address those needs. The state DOE received grants of $75,000 in 1987 and $82,000 in 1988.

With this funding, the DOE completed a report on the number of homeless children in the state. The Department of Education also reviewed and adopted the federal guidelines and has recommended that:

-awareness of local homeless populations in their attendance areas be increased;

-school divisions provide homeless children transportation across attendance or district lines;

-schools provide homeless children appropriate services and have accurate and up-to-date information on other area services;

-services that support economic, social, and educational stability among homeless families be coordinated at the state, local, and federal levels;

-the Office of the Coordinator of Homeless Child Education (DOE) provide information to shelter providers, homeless people, and school divisions on the rights of homeless children and youth to an education and services, and assist in resolving difficulties arising in these areas.

Most schools systems have been willing to cooperate in efforts to assist the homeless, but have been hampered by a state law that requires that records of immunizations be submitted prior to admission. Because homeless children generally lack these records, schools can either request records from other school divisions or refer the child to the public health department for injections. However, if a child has already had injections but lacks the required records, there is concern that a child's health may be endangered by repeated immunizations.

The DOE is monitoring the response of school districts in assisting homeless children in attending school and will submit periodic reports to the U.S. Department of Education.

Adult Education. Another division of the state DOE, the Division of Adult Education, receives McKinney money for literacy and basic skills remediation programs for homeless adults. Many homeless people lack the skills necessary to seek and maintain employment.

Unlike the school admissions program, these federal dollars have been directed to specific programs in various parts of the state each year. Local governments and nonprofit organizations have been the primary recipients.

Job Training and Employment

Virginia's shelters reported that many of the homeless people they see lack basic job skills. Some residents are referred to limited day-labor jobs. These jobs are generally low wage and provide no security. Because physically demanding day-labor jobs are not appropriate for many homeless people, job training is needed to help the homeless obtain decent jobs and become self-supporting.

The Fairfax Department of Social Services received McKinney funds for a job training demonstration program. The grant funds a program that works with three local shelters to identify and train homeless people in a number of areas, including basic skills instruction, remedial education, literacy instruction, job search activities and counseling, and job preparatory training.

Summary of McKinney Act Programs

Federal funding available under the McKinney Act is one of the major sources of funding and support for public sector initiatives to assist the homeless in Virginia. Though limited in scope and funding, and plagued with administrative problems, the Act provides the Commonwealth with the opportunity to assist the homeless in ways it otherwise could not.

Some state and local agencies, however, are unaware of these initiatives and remain isolated in their efforts to assist the homeless. Because of the lack of coordination and information and redundant program guidelines, a duplication of efforts exists in areas such as emergency food/shelter and mental health services, while huge gaps remain in health, housing, and employment training.

The federal program has been widely criticized for using a "band-aid" approach to the problem. It does not address the shortage of affordable housing and inadequate incomes.

The complexity of the program guidelines (see Appendix D) and funding streams have made applying for funds difficult. Some funds go directly to local governments and nonprofit organizations, while others go through state agencies to these same entities. Many federal agencies also duplicate program services.

Independent of the McKinney Act, the state has taken steps to address some of these problems. The major initiatives have been in the area of housing.

The Department of Housing and Community Development and the Housing Study Commission have a number of efforts underway intended to assist in program coordination and more effective utilization of resources. The Housing Study Commission has recommended new funding mechanisms, as well as legislative policy for housing programs, and advocated for additional funds for shelters and a homeless prevention program. DHCD is coordinating state and federally funded shelter programs (under SHARE), developing a data base on housing programs, and investigating other mechanisms to promote the sharing and dissemination of information. DHCD has also taken the initiative to recommend to HUD that states be granted more flexibility in administering federal programs.

If HUD gives the states a greater role in implementing McKinney Act programs, if the Act is fully funded and new programs are included as proposed, Virginia will be able to expand its efforts to assist the homeless and make these efforts more effective. However, careful planning and interagency coordination are needed at the state level to address the causes of homelessness and eliminate program limitations and fragmention.

Partnerships in Virginia

Creative new partnerships are needed to promote better use of existing resources and combat the rise of homelessness. Two types of partnerships that can provide meaningful solutions to homelessness are those among state agencies, particularly housing and social services, and between public agencies and private entities.

Partnerships Among State Agencies

Increasingly, the welfare system is becoming the agency of last resort for the homeless. Many homeless people turn to social service agencies for housing because there is no place else to turn. As a result, it is necessary for state social service agencies to attempt to bridge the gap created by reductions in federal funding for housing and decreases in public benefits. Scarce resources are being siphoned from regular programs and federal grants are being sought in an attempt to respond to the problem.

At the same time, housing agencies find that some people who need housing also need services that housing agencies are not equipped to provide. Thus, it is important for state housing,social service, and health agencies to work together to address the multi-service needs of homeless persons.

DSS and DHCD have taken steps independently of one another to develop programs to support the homeless. Each plans to increase cooperation and strategic planning in the future as they seek solutions to this multi-dimensional problem.

Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships are another area where initiatives are underway to assist the homeless. One partnership brings together a state mandate and private funding under the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA).

At the recommendation of the Housing Study Commission, the VHDA was established in 1972 to assist low and moderate income families in obtaining affordable, safe, and sanitary housing not available from private sources.

The Authority was established as a self-supporting, quasi-private agency, with a state mandate to: encourage the investment of private capital to stimulate the construction and rehabilitation of residential housing to meet the needs of low and moderate income persons and families or to stabilize such areas through the use of public financing. The VHDA board is appointed by the Governor.

The Virginia Housing Development Authority originally implemented its mandate by:

- -offering below-market financing for the purchase of single-family homes and for the construction and rehabilitation of rental units, and
- -administering federal rental assistance programs such as rent payment subsidies.

The VHDA has also provided financing for the construction of apartments for moderate income families, for special activities such as low-interest financing of home energy improvements, and for participation in the Virginia Appalachian Housing Development Program.

More recently, the VHDA started two other programs that are, in part, directed to the homeless population. The first, the Virginia Housing Fund, is a revolving loan fund created from reserves in 1986 after a Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) study recommended its establishment. The purpose of the fund is to offer loans to state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other parties that utilize donations and grants to leverage these funds. Most of the supplemental funding has come from federal subsidy programs, but some has been received from foundations.

The $45 million fund has been used for 70 projects in Virginia that are not served by any other VHDA programs. Of this $45 million, almost half has been allocated for mortgages to very low income families, with smaller amounts going to group homes for the mentally disabled and senior citizens.

Projects that have been funded include emergency shelters for the homeless or for abused spouses and children, group homes for the mentally retarded, and rehabilitative programs designed to create affordable housing for low income families. One million dollars was set aside in 1986 for low cost loans for the purchase, construction, or rehabilitation of facilities for shelter programs.

The second program initiated by the VHDA is the $47 million Virginia Housing Partnership Fund. The Partnership Fund has objectives similar to the Virginia Housing Fund, but it provides matching grants, rather than loans.

Community Development Corporations

Another promising area for additional resources is the community development corporations. These groups are usually private, nonprofit, and neighborhood-based and are becoming key partners in many of the financing arrangements being developed by state and local officials. They enable local government to work with local nonprofits, businesses, civic, and other groups to increase the supply of low-income housing.

In Virginia, many local governments have housing authorities that assume the role of the private community development authority. In Arlington County, however, where no public housing authority exists, a private, nonprofit organization is working to preserve low-income rental housing and prevent those at risk of being homeless from being displaced.

Last year the Arlington Housing Authority bought almost 400 units in a 1,000 unit apartment building that was about to be developed as a high rent facility. The multi-family units in Lee Gardens were rehabilitated, using Section 8 federal funds, for low-income families.

The Arlington Housing Authority has also begun working with a local church (St. Charles) to create transitional housing for homeless, single mothers. Because federal funds are so limited, the corporation has begun fund raising efforts in the private sector, in addition to drawing on its membership, for new initiatives.

Private and Nonprofit Sector Initiatives

The private and nonprofit sectors have traditionally assumed much of the responsibility for helping the homeless. As the numbers of homeless people have increased, however, organizations have been overwhelmed with demands for food, shelter, and clothing.

Many churches and voluntary organizations have organized at local and national levels to respond to the larger problem of homelessness in this country. Organizations that have historically been involved in assisting people, including the United Way, the Salvation Army, the American Red Cross, the National Council of Churches, Catholic Charities, and the Council of Jewish Federations are involved with these efforts. New nonprofit organizations, like the Coalition for the Homeless, have also been formed.

To a lesser extent, professional and trade associations and businesses have become active in addressing the problem and have begun adding the homeless to their agendas. A description of some of the major players and their initiatives follows.

Religious Organizations. Churches and synagogues have always been at the forefront of efforts to help people in crisis. Not surprisingly, churches have been involved at many levels and in many ways to assist the homeless.

Freedom House, a private, nonprofit organization in Richmond, coordinates the work of several hundred local area congregations who assist the homeless with emergency shelter, food, and other daily necessities. Congregations provide funds and volunteers to assist the homeless year round.

From November through March, CARITAS, a group of 75 area churches and synagogues, takes turns providing homeless people with an evening meal and a place to sleep. Volunteers and staff from the Emergency Shelter, Inc., support the effort.

Local Nonprofit Organizations. Several groups have formed in Virginia to work on behalf of the homeless and promote the development of low-income housing.

The Virginia Coalition for the Homeless was organized in July 1986 as an advocacy group for the homeless. The group's membership is open to all those concerned about the homeless. The Coalition aims to support shelter providers, gather and distribute information about the homeless, and lobby for state and federal funding of shelters and prevention programs.

The Coalition produces a directory of all emergency shelters in the state that is updated each year. It also conducts annual surveys of the homeless population that have become valuable sources of information about a diverse population for policy makersand advocates. The survey results have revealed trends that mirror the national population, such as the growing number of homeless children.

The Coalition also shares information about local problems and issues such as zoning for new shelters. The group drafted and proposed the homeless prevention program and lobbied for state funding for shelters.

The Virginia Housing Coalition was formed in 1978 to provide a forum for individuals and organizations concerned about the growing housing crisis in Virginia and promote the development of permanent housing. The Coalition offers opportunities for members (primarily nonprofit groups) to share information, create a collective voice for housing needs, educate the public about Virginia's housing needs, and promote the development and preservation of affordable, safe, decent housing.

In 1986, the Coalition co-sponsored the first statewide housing conference that helped bring about the VHDA Housing Fund. It also supported the creation of the Housing Partnership Fund.

National Nonprofit Organizations. Virginians have also aligned themselves with efforts at the national level. These include support of national nonprofit organizations and affiliation with professional and trade associations. Two major national, nonprofit organizations are the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

The National Coalition for the Homeless was organized in 1982 to provide information to persons interested in alleviating homelessness. Since then, it has become one of the leading advocacy agencies, drafting model legislation for states and the federal government and lobbying for new programs and funding.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness, formed in 1983, focuses on addressing systemic causes. For example, one of their programs, the Food Stamp Information Campaign, makes efforts to reach eligible individuals not currently enrolled in the program.

Professional and Trade Associations. National associations and their local chapters have also become involved in assisting the homeless. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) launched a public awareness campaign in the last year and encouraged local chapters to distribute information in their communities.

The American Institute for Architects (AIA) developed the Search for Shelter Program with the AIA Students and the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation. Local AIA chapters sponsored a series of workshops in 29 cities to encourage architects, students of architecture, housing experts, government officials, and others to design shelters and renovate facilities for shelters and spur communities to action. The group has successfully completed two projects and 19 others are scheduled for completion. One of their projects was undertaken by the Williamsburg-Norfolk-Hampton Roads Chapter.

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and its educational arm, the National Home Builders Institute, have made extensive efforts to address the crisis of homelessness. The Institute sponsored a major symposium last Fall entitled, "The many faces of homelessness -- Laying the foundation for action." The conference was co-sponsored by 53 organizations and produced the valuable resource material listed below.

- -a Solutions Guide that includes descriptions of successful building projects;
- -a Helping People Guide that highlights local community action projects;
- -a 30 minute documentary on the many faces of homelessness; and
- -a paper entitled, "Where Will Our Children Live?", written by the new President of the NAHB, Shirley Wiseman.

The materials were distributed to 800 local associations that were asked to work with local nonprofit organizations to address problems related to zoning and securing building materials.

The Northern Virginia Builders Industry Council accepted the challenge and is working with the Maryland chapter and two nonprofit organizations to apply for federal funds to build transitional housing on government land.

The NAHB President has made "housing affordability" the priority of the organization. She testified before federal legislative subcommittees, appeared on television talk shows, and is working with HUD to develop a national affordability housing model.

In the legal arena, the American Bar Association has encouraged its membership to offer legal services to clients in shelters to help them secure their rights to fair housing, obtain public benefits, and provide counsel for problems such as domestic disputes.

Businesses. Corporations have put homelessness on their philanthropic agendas and have increased their roles in public/private ventures. A survey conducted by the Conference Board of 130 large corporations revealed that homelessness ranked sixth as an area of major corporate involvement.

Some businesses have developed programs that provide grants, endowments, seed money, in-kind support, or cash donations that augment public funds. In Manassas, IBM assisted the Serve Shelter by providing funds for a computer, office furniture, toys for children at Christmas, and food baskets at Thanksgiving. They also offered their staff as volunteers to supplement the work of shelter staff.

Another large area corporation, K-Mart Discount Stores, recently sponsored a "Homeless Awareness Week." Using the store front, shelter volunteers distributed flyers about the homeless problem and asked for donations of toys and money. An in-store display was also used as part of their educational efforts.

Businesses are also working with universities, foundations, and nonprofit organizations to expand understanding of the issues related to homelessness. For example, a recent national conference on homeless children and youth was funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and the Abell Foundation. The conference was sponsored by the Johns Hopkins University Institute for Policy Studies in cooperation with the University's School of Hygiene and Public Health, CHILDHOPE, Family Service America, the Association of Junior Leagues, and the U.S. Committee for UNICEF.

Community Support Services

Comprehensive community services are essential to enable families to regain or attain self-sufficiency. Recognizing this, many programs in Virginia are incorporating a wide range of services in their shelter and transitional housing programs.

One such program is ACTS (Action in the Community through Services) in Prince William County. The ACTS program is a general emergency services center that gives special attention to the needs of the homeless population and victims of domestic violence. The center includes an emergency shelter, a shelter for battered women, and a new transitional housing program.

In Northern Virginia, most of the homeless people ACTS sees are working couples with children who cannot afford rent, or a security deposit and rent. Therefore, many services are geared toward assisting families budget their limited incomes and obtain a GED and/or other skills in order to secure a higher paying job.

In addition to food and emergency shelter, the ACTS program provides child care, thrift store items, counseling for children dealing with stress, tutoring for children, and parenting skills classes for adults. Transportation is provided to medical appointments and social services agencies. Emergency funds areavailable for medical expenses, gas, and other small expenditures. A help line is also available to those in trouble outside of the shelters.

Another program, the first transitional housing program in the Richmond metropolitan area, focuses on the needs of the many homeless single women with children. St. Joseph's Villa and the Emergency Shelter, Inc. opened a transitional housing program to offer these families the stability they need to get back on their feet. Women and their children can stay in the apartments for three months to two years.

The transitional housing program is designed to provide families with support and instill a sense of responsibility. Each client is required to put 10% of her income toward rent. This money is held in escrow until she leaves the program. In addition, clients are asked to sign contracts that state they will commit to educational or vocational training, participate in counseling, and abide by house rules. In return, the women are provided with a small apartment, a kitchen, a recreational room that they share, and child care services.

Richmond's Street Team takes still another approach to providing comprehensive community services to homeless families. Under a demonstration program grant from the federal government, the City of Richmond uses a multi-disciplinary team of professionals to respond to the many different problems experienced by the homeless population. The team consists of case managers in social services, mental health, and substance abuse. There is also a general "family" case manager who provides assistance to shelter residents and a psychiatric nurse.

The Team works with shelters to provide clothing and other essentials and assists homeless people in applying for public benefits and obtaining other support services. Parenting and other special classes and transportation are also provided.

Though different in approach, all of these programs offer homeless families a range of services to meet their diverse needs and to help them become self-sufficient. Each program tries to bridge the gap between the often fragmented, traditional services. They attempt to "normalize" the lives of homeless families and minimize the devastating impact of not having a home.

VI. WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Many programs have been implemented on the local, state, and national levels for families who are now homeless or who live on the brink of homelessness, but the future is not bright. There is continuing concern because most of the new initiatives address the symptoms of homelessness and not the root causes.

The McKinney Act is a positive, beginning initiative, but the funds provided as a result of the Act are disbursed through grants. However helpful grants are, they represent an unstable source of funding for nonprofit agencies. Each year Congress must reauthorize the McKinney Act and determine the level of funding programs will receive. For service providers this means there is no guarantee of future funds and program continuity.

There is limited coordination on the federal level and no coordination on the state level of McKinney Act programs. Localities and local agencies must attempt to sort through the maze of funding sources to determine the programs for which they are eligible. This can be a difficult and time consuming task. Agencies that provide services to families who are most in need are forced to rely on a fragmented system of resources.

The current systems of supporting families in no way reflect a national attitude that families are the cornerstone of society. Without a concerted effort, the future for many families will be bleak.

The first step toward mitigating homelessness is to acknowledge that:

-homelessness is a problem that affects all citizens;

-families are homeless because of factors beyond their control, such as scarcity of affordable housing and low wages;

-housing is not a luxury for a few, but a basic need for all families; and

-homelessness can be eliminated through the cooperative efforts of all members of communities.

There are many opportunities for concerned citizens and advocates to become involved at the local, state, and national levels.

Some localities are forming coalitions to ensure that their city or town is one that provides safe and affordable housing for all families. Local directors of shelters and service agencies can be a valuable resource for information on community initiatives in a particular area. Churches and synagogues have a tradition of community involvement and are another resource for persons interested in helping families in their localities.

An important avenue for advocacy at the State level is through the Virginia General Assembly. Virginia's legislators are responsive to their constituents. Virginia's citizens can help guide a legislative response to the problem of homelessness among families by contacting representatives in the General Assembly to express concerns and by providing information about the problem in a specific region along with suggested solutions.

There are several national organizations that can help advocates keep abreast of Congressional actions and offer ideas for national advocacy. These organizations and other agencies are listed at the end of this section.

Collective intelligence and creativity have made it possible to transmit a letter to another country in a matter of minutes; to be in another hemisphere in a number of hours; to photograph the planet Neptune; and to transplant a heart and extend life. Clearly there should be the capability to provide housing for children and families.

"My husband and I purchased a three family house. We had tenants. It was our home. Then I became ill, I couldn't work. We couldn't meet the payments. They foreclosed. When I first came here [a welfare hotel], I thought all these were in my future still. After living here awhile you begin to lose hold of your dream. You start to tell yourself - 'this is it. It isn't going to change. It can't get worse. It isn't going to get better.' So you start to lose the courage to fight back.

You spend a lot of time in line. You spend a whole day at the washer. You spend another whole day at the welfare. Then you also have to look for housing. I walk for hours. I look. I make appointments. I go out every morning once my daughter goes to school. I take the baby with me.

Schoolwise this is hard for her. She went to Head Start and parochial school. Here, she has thirty-three in her class. I follow everything: her lessons, homework, and her grades. For these children I have the highest hopes. I tell the principal I want my son to go to college and become a doctor. I want my daughter to become a nurse. He tells me, 'Well, Mrs. Abington, certain children can adjust to this and certain children can't.' I don't know if they should adjust to something if it's bad."

Rachel and Her Children
Jonathon Kozol

For More Information on Advocacy Efforts On Behalf of Homeless Families Contact:

National Coalition for the Homeless
1439 Rhode Island Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 265-2371

Housing Now!, Inc.
425 Second Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 347-2405

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Affairs
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20410-0000
(202) 755-6685

Virginia Coalition for the Homeless
7825 Cherokee Road
Richmond, Virginia 23225

Virginia Housing Study Commission
205 North Fourth Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 225-3797

Virginia Housing Development Authority
601 South Belvidere Street
Richmond, Virginia 23220-6504
(804) 782-1986

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
205 North Fourth Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 786-7891

VII. APPENDICES

A. Authorizations and Appropriations for the McKinney Act by Federal Agency

B. Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan (CHAP)

C. Background Information on State Housing Commission and Programs

D. McKinney Act Program Descriptions for which Virginia Receives Funds

APPENDIX A

Authorizations and Appropriations for the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act by Federal Agency
(budget authority; dollars in millions)

	1987		1988		1989		1990		
	Authorized	Appropriated	Authorized	Appropriated	Authorized	Appropriated	Authorized	Reagan Budget	Bush Budget
Housing and Urban Development									
Emergency Shelter	$100.0	$50.0	$120.0	$8.0	$120.0	$46.5	$125.0	$0.0	$125.0
Transitional and Supportive Housing	80.0	80.0	100.0	65.0	100.0	80.0	105.0	70.9	105.0
Supplemental Assistance	25.0	15.0	25.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	11.0	0.0	11.0
Section 8 (SRO's)	35.0	35.0	35.0	0.0	50.0	45.0	50.0	73.6	50.0
Health and Human Resources									
Health Care Services	50.0	46.0	30.0	14.4	61.2	14.8	63.6	14.8	63.6
Mental Health Demonstration Projects	10.0	9.3	0.0	0.0	11.0	4.6	11.5	0.0	11.5
Mental Health Block Grant	35.0	32.2	...	11.5	35.0	14.1	35.0	14.1	35.0
Alcohol and Drug Demo Grant	10.0	9.2	0.0	0.0	14.0	4.5	17.0	0.0	17.0
Community Services Block Grant	40.0	36.8	40.0	19.1	42.0	18.9	42.0	0.0	42.0
AFDC Demonstration Programs	...	...	...	...	...	...	20.0	0.0	20.0
Federal Emergency Management Agency									
Emergency Food and Shelter	125.0	125.0	124.0	114.0	129.0	114.0	134.0	114.0	134.0
Department of Labor									
Job Training	0.0	0.0	12.0	9.6	13.0	9.4	13.0	9.4	13.0
Department of Education									
Education for Homeless Children	5.0	4.6	5.0	4.8	5.0	4.8	5.0	5.0	5.0
Adult Literacy	7.5	6.9	10.0	7.2	10.0	7.1	10.0	7.3	10.0
Exemplary Education Grants	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	2.5	0.0	2.5	0.0	2.5
Department of Veterans									
Veterans' Mentally Ill Program	...	5.0	...	5.0	15.0	13.2	15.0	15.0	15.0
Veterans' Domiciliary Care Program	...	15.0	...	0.0	15.0	10.5	15.0	15.0	15.0
Independent									
Interagency Council	0.2	0.2	2.5	0.8	1.1	1.1	1.2	0.9	1.2
Total	$522.7	$470.2	$506.0	$259.4	$633.8	$388.5	$675.8	$340.0	$675.8

NOTE: This table does not include programs designed to aid the needy in general but for which no specific amount can be assigned to the homeless. This includes the Temporary Emergency Food Program (TEFAP) and Food Stamp Program.

Prepared by Julie Gerber-Fields, Federal Funds Information for States, (202) 624-5849

Source: Report by the National Governors' Association entitled STATUS OF PROGRAMS UNDER THE STEWART B. McKINNEY HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT AND RELATED LEGISLATION, dated April 2, 1988 and updated March 8, 1989.

COMPREHENSIVE HOMELESS ASSISTANCE PLAN

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

February, 1989

APPENDIX B

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

I. Introduction: Homelessness in Virginia 1

II. Homeless Assistance Goal, Objectives and Strategies . . . 5

III. Need for Assistance under McKinney Act 9

- A. Emergency Shelter Grants Program 10
- B. Supportive Housing Demonstration Program 11
  - 1. Transitional Housing 11
  - 2. Permanent Housing for the Disabled 11
- C. Supplemental Assistance 12
- D. Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation for Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Dwellings 13
- E. Education and Job Training 14

IV. Inventory of Facilities and Services for the Homeless . . 15

- A. Shelters 16
- B. Supportive Housing 19
- C. Supplemental Assistancce 20
- D. Education and Job Training 20
- E. Section 8 SRO 20

V. Strategy to Match Needs with Facilities/Services 21

- A. Providing Information on Available Services 22
- B. Recognizing the Special Needs of Certain Homeless Types 25

VI. How Federal Assistance will Complement and Enhance Available Services 26

- A. Emergency Shelter Grants Program 27
- B. Supportive Housing Demonstration Program 27
  - 1. Transitional Housing 27
  - 2. Permanent Housing 27
- C. Supplemental Assistance 27
- D. Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation 28

VII. Department of Labor Job Training Demonstration 29

VIII. Contact Point 31

IX. Coordination 33

X. State Certification 35

I. INTRODUCTION

Homelessness in Virginia

During the last two years the number of emergency shelters in Virginia has almost doubled. Despite public and private efforts to shelter homeless, 15,195 homeless Virginians were turned away from emergency shelters in 1987 with another 53,317 persons being given only temporary shelter, according to the Virginia Coalition for the Homeless performed August 15 1988. Shelter providers report that 60% of the homeless persons sheltered are single persons. Families and children are the fastest growing sub-groups among the homeless, with children under 18 accounting for one-fourth of Virginia's homeless in 1987. Nearly half of these children were under 6 years of age. In a state spouse abuse statistical report compiled by the Department of Social Services, from 7/01/87 to 6/30/88, 2882 women and 3518 children were housed in battered spouse shelters. (See chart on page 3)

In 1988, the Virginia Department of Planning and Budget published findings from a study completed that year indicating that one fourth of Virginia's homeless are without housing due to eviction, with significant numbers of homeless due to transience, displacement due to domestic disputes, relocation or unemployment. This study also found the homeless population varying in type regionally as follows:

Southwestern Va. - Hidden homeless provided for in family networks with assistance from local churches.

Shenandoah - Transients - 80%; Families - 15%; Resident street people - 5%.
Roanoke City officials report from shelters that 50 - 60% single men make up their client group.

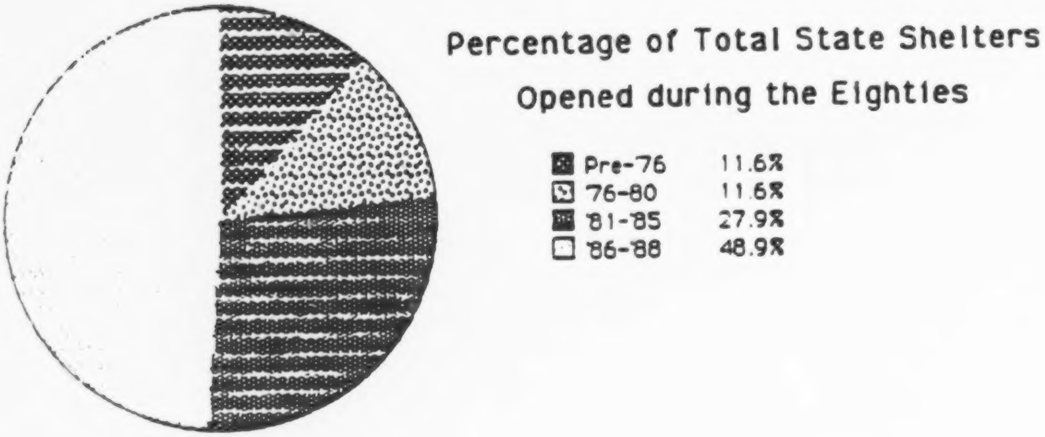
Northern - 60% single male between ages of 18 and 30: 10% single female; 30% families. One-fifth of single homeless suffer from mental health or substance abuse disorders.

Central - Economally homeless due to teenage pregnancy, job loss and loss of benefits.
66% - transient; 20% - families; 30% mental disorders and 25% substance abusers.

Southside - Transients and abused spouses are main shelter residents with deinstitutionalized persons and economically displaced persons receiving help from relatives.
In Petersburg, January - May 1988 shelter applicants were 55% transient; 27% homeless singles and families; 18% victims of domestic violence.

Tidewater - Rapid increase in numbers of homeless, with population estimates between 1800 and 3000 persons.

1987 Shelter Provider Survey


Percentage of Total State Shelters Opened during the Eighties

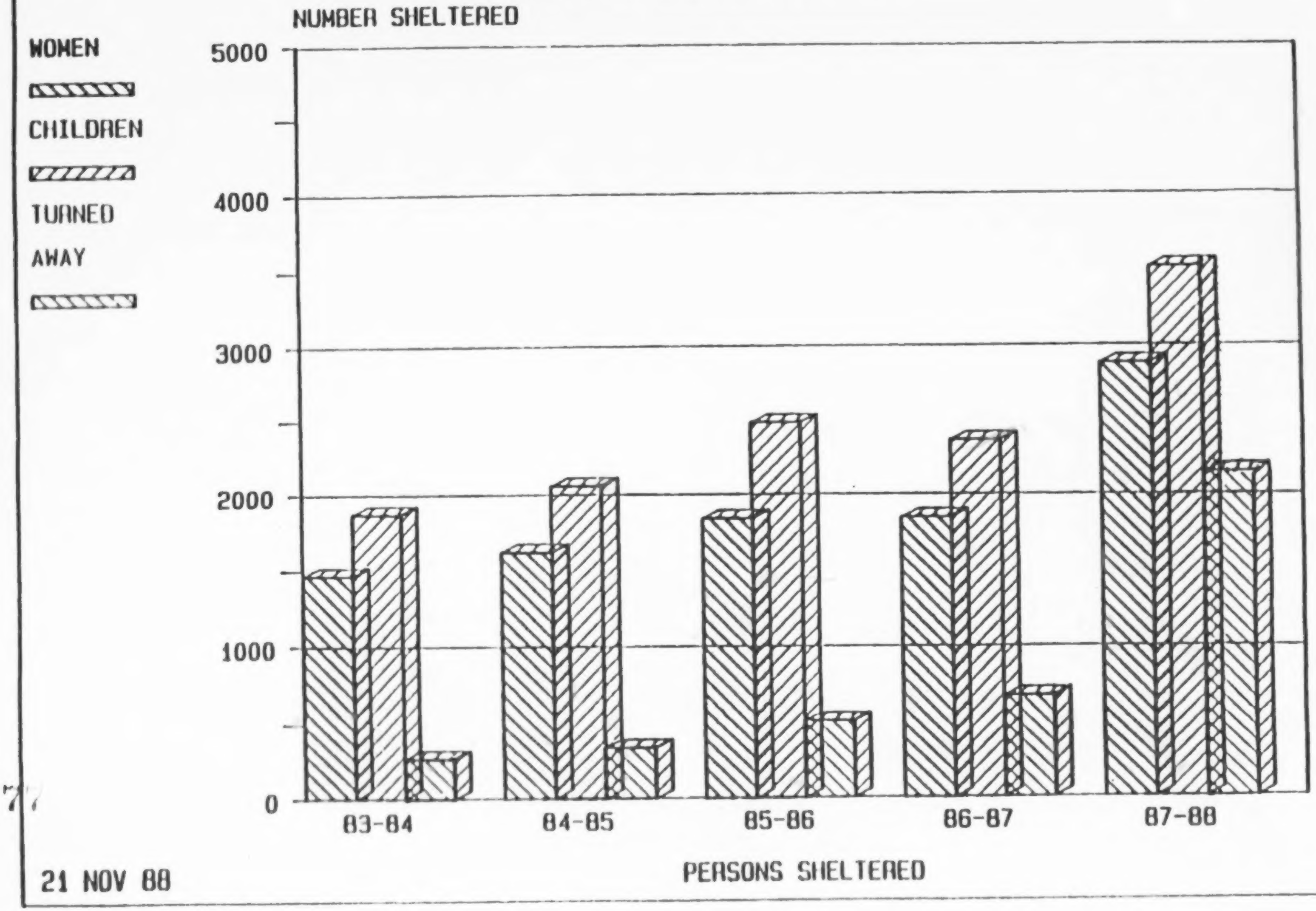
Prepared by

Virginia Coalition for the Homeless
7825 Cherokee Road
Richmond, VA 23225 (804)320-4577

August 15, 1988

VA FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM

BATTERED WOMEN SHELTER STATISTICS



21 NOV 88

The Governor and 1988 Virginia General Assembly established the $47.5 million Virginia Housing Partnership Fund to encourage and support affordable housing opportunities for low and moderate income persons. The Department of Housing and Community Development was designated to administer the Fund and has developed several grant and loan programs to accomplish the purposes of this initiative.

The Department and Board of Housing and Community Development have determined the specific loan programs that will use $44,245,000 in loan funds appropriated for the 1988-90 biennium. Six loan programs have been identified:

* Single Room Occupancy and Transitional Housing	$1.5 million
* Congregate Disabled	$1.9 million
* Single-family Rehabilitation	$9.0 million
* Multi-family Rehabilitation	$14.845 million
* Single- and Multi-family Production	$6.0 million
* Energy Conservation	$11.0 million

A total of $2,675,000 will be used for grants for housing the homeless, emergency home repair, and seed funds for new non-profit housing organizations. A summary of the commitments during calendar year 1988 for the three grant programs is provided below:

- First year funding of $750,000 through the Homeless Facilities Expansion Program helped create 215 more beds in twelve facilities throughout Virginia.
- Eleven non-profit housing organizations received seed money grants totaling $300,000, stimulating new or enhanced grass-roots efforts to bridge the affordable housing gap.
- Forty-two organizations, ranging from local governments to non-profit housing groups, agencies on aging, and community action agencies shared $250,000 in grant funds for the emergency home repair program

Although the state is confronting the issue of homelessness on several levels, obviously the need is still urgent to continue to growing shelter and transitional housing capacity to assist the increasing homeless population. The use of McKinney Act funds to enhance current efforts or fill in voids where no other funding is available is critical in Virginia's efforts to deal with homelessness.

II. HOMELESS ASSISTANCE

GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

80

Assistance for Virginia's Homeless

Goal, Objectives and Strategies

GOAL: The goal of the Virginia Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan is to improve the circumstances and conditions confronting the homeless population of Virginia by providing adequate shelter facilities and services and by assuring homeless persons access to educational and job training resources for improving their opportunities for achieving self sufficiency.

A. Objective: To provide additional emergency shelter facilities and shelter beds.

Strategies:
- o Expand existing shelter capacity to accommodate more persons.
- o Develop new shelter facilities for the homeless throughout the state.
- o Provide assistance in cultivating new sponsors for shelters.

B. Objective: To improve the quality and conditions of existing emergency shelter.

Strategies:
- o Rehabilitate, repair and otherwise assist in bringing existing shelters up to building code standards.
- o Assure shelters are maintained in a safe and sanitary condition.
- o Improve availability and access to health care and other essential human services for the homeless.

C. Objective: To assist existing shelters in meeting operating costs.

Strategies:
- o Provide grant funding assistance to shelters to assist in meeting the cost of shelter operations.
- o Provide for adequate maintenance, insurance, utilities and furnishings of shelters.

D. Objective: To work in conjunction with Virginia's localities in coordinating services for the homeless.

Strategies:

- Assist localities in planning for meeting the needs of the homeless.
- Assist localities in identifying various resources available for homeless persons.
- Coordinate homeless assistance plans in the state by working with other Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) Formula Jurisdictions in Virginia.

E. Objective: To assist the homeless in becoming self-sufficient by developing better employment opportunities through job training and other educational programs.

Strategies:

- Assure access to educational and job training resources for improving the opportunities.
- Develop new job training and educational programs for the homeless.
- Assure access to free public education for all homeless children and youths.

F. Objective: To finance the implementation of statewide programs to address the needs of the homeless.

Strategies:

- Provide a continuous source of federal, state and local funding of shelter facilities and services for the homeless.
- Provide incentives and new alternatives for increasing support of local shelters and services for the homeless.

G. Objective: To provide longer term housing opportunities to assist homeless persons in making the transition to permanent self supported living.

Strategies:

- Provide transitional housing facilities for homeless persons in need of more than short term emergency shelter.
- Provide new permanent housing opportunities for low income and homeless disabled persons.

H. Objective: To provide additional housing opportunities in Virginia to assure that lower income persons can obtain safe, decent and affordable housing.

Strategies:

- Seek state funds to support non-profit organizations in assisting lower income persons avoid eviction or foreclosure through housing counseling and other assistance.

- Provide additional low income housing development resources through the Virginia Housing Fund and other innovative programs.

III. NEED FOR HOMELESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN VIRGINIA PROVIDED UNDER THE STEWART B. MCKINNEY HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT

84

Need for Homeless Assistance Programs in Virginia Provided Under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act

The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (the Act) is intended to provide urgently needed assistance to protect and improve the lives of the homeless population. The Act contains provisions for assistance to states and certain localities to address the varied issues and needs associated with the homeless Title IV of the Act contains a number of housing assistance provisions to be administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). A description of each housing related program under Title IV and a statement of its relevance and need in the Commonwealth of Virginia follows.

A. Emergency Shelter Grants Program

This program is authorized by Subtitle B of Title IV of the Act. It provides formula grants to states, local governments and non-profit organizations for the rehabilitation and conversion of buildings for use as emergency shelters and for the cost of operating and maintaining the shelters. Essential human service activities may be funded through a maximum of 20% of the total grant award. Staffing and other administrative costs are not eligible. The reasons for temporary homelessness in Virginia are very diverse. Eviction, domestic violence and unemployment are among many causes that place people in a temporary housing crisis. Emergency shelters provide housing and services for these persons on a temporary basis (1-30 days) until a more permanent housing solution can be found. Non-profit shelters are the primary providers of overnight lodging for the homeless. Many of the shelters, however, are able to provide only limited space because of the lack of adequate facilities and capacity. Many shelters for the homeless are unable to obtain sufficient funds to make needed physical improvements to shelter facilities. Most shelter funds are used to pay for the basic day to day operations of the facilities including supplies, staff and facility maintenance. There is a concern that some shelters will be lost in Virginia due to insufficient funds required to bring facilities into compliance with state Building Code regulations.

The Emergency Shelter Grant Program (ESGP) provides needed funding for the renovation and rehabilitation of shelters and for the operation and maintenance of these facilities. This program enables shelters to expand their capacity and serve more persons in need of temporary shelter, and Virginia will continue to make use of ESGP funds for these purposes.

Virginia is currently experiencing a shortage of adequate shelter capacity. As stated previously, 15,195 persons seeking emergency shelter in Virginia were turned away in 1987. Therefore, a partnership effort of federal, state and local governments to support public and privately operated emergency shelters is needed. There is a need throughout Virginia for additional beds to serve Virginia's homeless.

B. Supportive Housing Demonstration Program

This program is authorized by Subtitle C of Title IV of this Act. The program is designed to assist in the development of various approaches for providing supportive housing, especially for deinstitutionalized homeless individuals, homeless families with children, homeless individuals with mental disabilities and other handicapped persons. This program contains the following two components

1. Transitional Housing

This program is designed to provide housing and various support services to assist homeless persons in making the transition from shelter dependency to independent living. The program is designed to provide housing for persons no longer eligible for emergency shelter but not fully self sufficient. Eligible applicants for this program include States, local governments and private non-profit organizations. Funds, which are available on a national competitive basis, may be used for acquisition and rehabilitation of structures, payments of up to 75 percent of operating costs and technical assistance.

Most shelter facilities in Virginia are intended to meet short term, emergency shelter needs. Transitional housing resources which provide a critical link between emergency shelter programs and permanent housing are in limited supply in the Commonwealth.

Shelters for the homeless throughout Virginia have indicated a need for transitional housing. Several shelters in the state are currently involved in trying to raise funds to provide transitional housing opportunities to assist homeless persons in becoming self sufficient.

Transitional housing and related support services are critical needs for some homeless persons. Such facilities are important elements of any comprehensive effort to effectively address the issue of homelessness in Virginia.

2. Permanent Housing for the Disabled Homeless

This program is designed to provide permanent housing units for handicapped homeless individuals. Local non-profit organizations are selected by the state to carry out local programs. The state is required to match the federal assistance provided. Funds may be used for acquisition and rehabilitation of structures and/or payments of up to 50 percent of operating costs for the first year and up to 25 percent of operating costs for the second year of project activity.

Many mentally and physically disabled persons in Virginia lack adequate resources and income to afford adequate housing. Shelter and other living accommodations have been inadequate in meeting the needs of these people who often require special care and facilities.

The recent trend toward deinstitutionalizing mentally disabled persons has dramatically increased the homelessness of this segment of the population. Some localities in Virginia report that as many as one-third of the shelter clients are deinstitutionalized persons.

Disabled persons often have difficulty in becoming self sufficient due to their physical or mental limitations. There is therefore a need in Virginia for a program to provide adequate permanent housing opportunities for low income disabled persons. Such a program would provide housing to a major component of the homeless population.

C. Supplemental Assistance for Facilities to Assist the Homeless

Subtitle D of Title IV establishes a new program of supplemental assistance to provide funds to cover costs in excess of assistance provided under the Emergency Shelter Grants or the Supportive Housing Demonstration programs. These funds are intended to meet the special needs of homeless families with children, elderly homeless and disabled homeless. The program would provide comprehensive assistance for innovative programs and alternative methods of meeting the needs of these persons. Assistance under the program is available to states, local governments and private non-profit organizations, and consists of non-interest bearing advances for the purchase, lease, substantial renovation or conversion of facilities, and grants for moderate rehabilitation and the provision of supportive services for homeless individuals. Assistance is only made available if the applicant makes reasonable efforts to use all available local resources.

Most shelters in Virginia are in critical need of additional funding for facility maintenance and rehabilitation, for providing additional space for the increasing demand for shelter, and for the costs of operating the shelters. State and federal assistance to shelters currently accounts for less than 6% of all shelter funding. Over 90% of the funding is derived from limited private sources. This program can assist the Commonwealth of Virginia in providing funding to help maintain adequate shelter facilities for the homeless.

The supplemental assistance would provide funding to address current shelter needs such as meeting building and fire safety regulations. The assistance would also enable shelters to expand their capacity by providing additional beds to accomodate the increasing number of homeless persons in Virginia.

D. Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation for SRO's (Single Room Occupancy)

Subtitle E of Title IV authorizes Section 8 housing assistance payments (HAP) for single room occupancy (SRO) units under the Moderate Rehabilitation program. These competitive allocations are made to local public housing authorities. The total cost of rehabilitation which can be amortized through a ten year HAP contract cannot exceed $14,000 per unit. The first priority for occupancy of housing rehabilitated under this program must be given to homeless individuals.

This program will provide a viable long term housing option for many homeless individuals. Currently, there is no combination rehab-rental assistance program targeted for single room occupancy units in Virginia. Furthermore, the individual who is not elderly, handicapped or disabled is not eligible under the existing Section 8 program for assistance in traditional rental units. This program provides rent assistance which may prevent increased homelessness.

This program will provide new housing opportunities for low income and homeless persons in Virginia. Many SRO facilities are located in the older areas of Virginia communities. The older structures often require rehabilitation in order to provide safe and decent housing. The funding from this program will assist in the rehabilitation of single room occupancy facilities that will provide an affordable longer term source of housing for many of Virginia's homeless or potentially homeless persons.

The rehabilitation of aging structures provided by this program is a vital component of providing housing for the homeless. The funding will be used not only for improving and expanding the capacity of certain facilities, but will be used to prevent the closing of other facilities. Many of the older structures do not meet building safety code requirements. During the past several years several code deficient buildings used as SRO housing have been demolished. The loss of such units leave many persons unable to locate or afford any other housing. In Richmond Virginia during 1986, the closing of the Earl Hotel as an SRO facility displaced over 100 very low income persons, leaving the residents with few alternative housing opportunities. This program will provide funding to prevent such displacement. The Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation for single room occupancy units program can increase the inventory of much needed alternatives for permanent housing for single homeless adults in Virginia.

E. Education and Job Training

The state government of the Commonwealth of Virginia will continue to coordinate job training programs for the homeless with other existing homeless assistance programs provided under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. (Note the Fairfax County Demonstration Program in Section IV, E.) In order to provide a coordination of job training programs and other homeless services at the local level, where the homeless problem is most effectively addressed, local applicants and grantees of program funding will be required to develop coordination plans. The plans would briefly describe how the applicant/grantee will interact with the Governor's Employment and Training Department, Virginia Employment Commission, and other job training programs.

The state will also assist in the development of an information referral service of various programs in Virginia that provide assistance to the homeless. The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will notify the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) of homeless assistance and shelter programs available in the state to facilitate the coordination of job training efforts for the homeless. DHCD will work in conjunction with the VEC to provide information on the location and status of job training programs for the homeless throughout Virginia.

IV. INVENTORY OF FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR THE HOMELESS IN VIRGINIA

Inventory of Facilities for the Homeless

A. Shelters

There are approximately sixty-five facilities in Virginia that provide services and assistance to homeless individuals and families. It is estimated that about forty-five of the facilities provide overnight shelter for the homeless. Other shelters provide only certain types of assistance, such as meals or counseling. The range of services and assistance provided varies significantly among shelters. The Virginia Coalition for the Homeless conducted a survey in 1988 of various shelters that provided overnight accommodations for the homeless. The 49 shelter providers, representing 60 shelter programs, responding to the survey indicated the following services provided:

Type of Assistance	Number of Providing Shelters
Emergency Shelter	54
Transitional Housing	23
Meals	49
Counseling	36
Case Management	17
Transportation	25
Child Care	23
Cash Assistance	17

Other services provided by various shelters include providing employment assistance, clothing, medicine, infant formula and diapers, and nurse care.

Some shelters are established to provide assistance to only certain segments of the homeless population. For example, Virginia has approximately twenty-eight shelters for persons who are homeless as a result of domestic violence (battered spouses) and approximately five shelters specifically established for abused and runaway youth who are without alternative housing. Over the last two years the Emergency Shelter Grants program provided more than $2 million to shelters in Virginia.

The following table provides a partial listing of shelters in Virginia which provide overnight accommodations, representing over 1600 bed space. This listing was developed from shelters in Virginia that were tracked in the 1988 Virginia Department of Planning and Budget study.

HOMELESS SHELTERS IN VIRGINIA

REGION 1 - SOUTHWESTERN

Appalachian Family Ministries	Big Stone Gap	Families
Hope House	Norton	Abused women
Haven of Rest	Bristol	Men
Salvation Army	Bristol	General
Shelter for Abused Women	Bristol	Abused women
Women's Resource Center	Radford	Abused women

REGION 2-SHENANDOAH

Alternatives for Abused Adults	Staunton	Abused women
First Step, Inc.	Harrisonburg	Abused women
Gladys House	Lexington	General
Harrisonburg Salvation Army	Harrisonburg	General
Justice House	Roanoke	General
Roanoke City Rescure Mission	Roanoke	Families
Salvation Army Men's Lodge	Roanoke	Men
Salvation Army Women & Children	Roanoke	Abused women
Shelter for Abused Women	Winchester	Abused women
Total Action Against Proverty	Roanoke	Families
Trust Shelter	Roanoke	General
Valley Mission	Staunton	General
Warren Co. Council on Dom. Violence	Front Royal	Abused women
Winchester Union Rescue Mission	Winchester	Men
Winchester VA Mens shelter	Winchester	Men

REGION 3-NORTHERN

Sullivan House	Arlington	General
ACTS	Dumfries	General
Turning Point	Dumfries	Abused women
ALIVE	Alexandria	General
Arlington Comm. Temp. Shelter(winter)	Arlington	Single men/women
Arlington VA Men's Shelter	Arlington	Men
Bailey's Crossroads Comm. Shelter	Fairfax	Single men/women
Blessed Sacrament Shelter	Alexandria	Men
Christ House	Woodbridge	Adults
Fairfax Va. Men/Women Shelter	Fairfax	
Fairfax County Transitional Prog	Fairfax	Families
First Assembly of God	Alexandria	Single men
Mill Road Shelter	Alexandria	General
Mondloch House -	Alexandria	Families
North County Community Shelter -	Reston	Families
SERVE, Inc. - Transitional	Manassas	Families
Shelter House, Inc.	Falls Church	Families
South County Community Shelter	Fort Belvoir	Single men/women
Salvation Army Transition Program		Families

REGION 4-CENTRAL

CARITAS	Richmond	Single men/women
Charlottesville Salvation Army	Charlottesville	General
Charter House	Charlottesville	Other/Pub. Inebriate
Daily Planet/Bunk House	Richmond	Mentally Ill
Emergency Shelter, Inc./Trnas.	Richmond	General
Fauquier Temp. Family Shelter	Warrenton	Families
Freedom House	Richmond	Single men/women
Good Samaritan Inn	Richmond	General
HOPE HOUSE Rappahannock Refuge	Fredricksburg	General
Rappahannock council on Dom. Violence	Fredricksburg	Abused women
Rosey Grier Youth Shelter	Richmond	Other/Abused youth
Runaway Emergency Shelter	Charlottesville	Runaways
Salvation Army	Richmond	General
SHE, Inc.	Charlottesville	Abused women
YWCA	Richmond	Abused women

REGION 5-SOUTHERN

CARES, Inc.	Petersburg	General/Abu. women
Rainbow House	Martinsville	Abused women
Lynchburg Salvation Army	Lynchburg	General
Samaritan Helping Hands Home	Emporia	General
Volunteer Ministries Community	Blackstone	General
Carey House	Lynchburg	Abused women
YWCA/Family Violence Prevention	Lynchburg	Abused women

REGION 6-TIDEWATER

The Dwelling Place	Norfolk	Families
HELP	Hampton	
Rainbow House	Hampton	
HER, Help & Emer. Response	Portsmouth	Battered Women
Mothers Inc.	Virgina Beach	General
Norfolk Salvation Army	Norfolk	Men
Norfolk Union Mission	Norfolk	general
Oasis Christian Fellowship	Virgina Beach	Single men/women
PARC Place	Portsmouth	Families
Peninsula Rescue Mission	Newport News	Families
Samaritan House I & II	Virgina Beach	Families
The Salvation Army	Hampto	Families
the Salvation Army/Transitional	Williamsburg	Families
Peninsula Council on Dom. Violence	Hampto	Abused women
Wmsbg. Taskforce on Battered Women	Williamsburg	Abused women
YWCA/Women in Crisis Shelter	Norfol	Abused women
Seton House	Virgina Beach	Runaways

REGION 7-EASTERN

Lighthouse Minis. Shelter Northampton	Northapton	General
The Haven	Warsaw	Abused women

B. Supportive Housing

1. Transitional Facilities

Transitional facilities in the state have often grown out of the shelter programs. In fact, some emergency shelters have opted for a more dual track approach of offering both emergency and transitional services within the same facility.

Recently there has been an emergence of transitional shelters within the state. The April, 1988 report on the Status of Programs under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act and Related Legislation * notes the following:

> Serve, Inc., a program in Manassas Virginia, rents transitional apartments for $400.00. The clients pay $100.00 and donations from the community pay the rest. Participants in the Serve program benefit from personal and family counseling as well as budget management and housing assistance. Persons assisted during the 60 day program have continued their education and found employment.
>
> A Lynchburg program, Carey House, which caters to the needs of abused women and their children operates 14 housing units. Carey House is funded through Section 8 certificates. Under Section 8 residents are required to pay 30% of their monthly income for housing. Carey House has been in operation since July 1987. The agency has compared statistics of its emergency and transitional shelter programs. Results show that 9.5% of Carey House clients have returned to their abusers (both families had a child with medical problems who required acute care) whereas, 22% of the Emergency Shelter clients returned to their abusers. These and other statistics tend to indicate that it is beneficial for the women to have the additional time to become self sufficient.

In addition, HUD has funded a Transitional Housing/Supportive Housing program in Fairfax County in FY 87 for $851,500, and to Fairfax County, Alexandria Community Services Board, Virginia Beach Community Services and Roanoke's Total Action Against Poverty in 1988 for $1,581,902.

2. Permanent Housing for the Disabled Homeless

Funded in FY 88, this DHCD administered program will provide for three acquisitions and one rehabilitation at a cost of $130,990, as follows:

Organization	Location	# served
Community Alternatives	Va. Beach	3 persons
Community Alternatives	Va. Beach	2 persons
Community Alternatives	Va. Beach	2 persons
Task Force	Richmond	5 persons

* Published by the National Governor Association.

C. Supplemental Assistance for Facilities to Assist the Homeless

In 1987, the City of Alexandria was awarded $754,677 as a demonstration project through its Alexandria Community services Board. SAFA was not funded in FY 89, but the availability of funds in the future would enhance other homelessness efforts.

D. Education and Job Training

Demonstration Program - In FY88, the Fairfax County Department of Social Services received a DOC grant for $74,898 under the Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Program. Activities in this program which works with three local shelters will include basic skills instruction, remedial education activities, basic literacy instruction, job search activities, job counseling, and job preparatory training, including resume writing and interviewing skills.

E. Section 8 SRO

There was no 1988 appropriation for this program under the McKinney Act. However, with the implementation of a $2 million loan program by Virginia Housing Partnership Fund which will assist in the acquisition/rehabilitation of SRO facilities, rental assistance through this program would greatly enhance the feasibility of expected project requests.

V. STRATEGY TO MATCH NEEDS OF THE HOMELESS IN VIRGINIA WITH FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Strategy to Match Needs with Facilities/Services

A. Providing Information on Available Services

The state government of the Commonwealth of Virginia will coordinate efforts to provide an information referral service regarding facilities and services available to the homeless. Providing information concerning available social services to the local level, where the problems of homelessness must be addressed, would be an important element of a comprehensive homeless plan. The following information and referral service resources are available in Virginia. These information centers provide housing related information and technical assistance that can be of assistance to shelters and their clients.

1. Arlington Information and
Referral Office
1800 North Edison Street
Arlington, VA 22207
703/ 558-2105
Affiliation: Arlington County
Managers Office

Jurisdictions Served: County
of Arlington

2. Charlottesville Information and
Referral Center
603 East Jefferson Street
P.O. Box 139
804/ 971-1903
Affiliation: United Way
Charlottesville

Jurisdictions Served: Planning
Districts 6, 7, 9, 10, 16

3. Fairfax Human Services
Information and Referral
4057 Chainbridge Road
Fairfax, VA 22030
703/ 691-3253
Affiliation: Fairfax County
Office of Human Services

Jurisdictions Served: County
of Fairfax

4. Fredericksburg Area Hotline Inc.
P.O. Box 7132
Fredericksburg, VA 22404
703/ 373-6608 or 703/ 371-1212
Affiliation: Rappahannock Area
Community Services Board

Jurisdictions Served: Counties
of Caroline, King George,
Spotsylvania, Stafford. City of
Fredericksburg

5. Lynchburg Information and
Referral Center of Central
Virginia
P.O. Box 2244
Lynchburg, VA 24501
804/ 845-8016
Affiliation: United Way
of Lynchburg

Jurisdictions Served:
Counties of Amherst,
Appomattox, Bedford,
Campbell. City of
Bedford, Lynchburg

6. Montgomery County Information
and Referral
P.O. Box 806
Christiansburg, VA 24073
703/ 382-6700, 382-1431
Exit. 292
Affiliation: Montgomery
County Community Services

Jurisdictions Served: County
of Montgomery

7. Information and Referral
Service of the Peninsula
1520 Aberdeen Road, Suite 221
Hampton, VA 23666
804/ 827-0327
Affiliation: Newport News
Social Services

Jurisdictions Served: Counties
James City, York. Cities of
Newport News, Hampton,
Poquoson, Williamsburg

8. Information Center of Hampton
Roads
1100 First VA Bank Towers
101 St. Paul Boulevard
Norfolk, VA 23510
804/ 625-4543
Affiliation: Planning Council
for Norfolk

Jurisdictions Served:
Counties of Accomack,
Gloucester, Isle of Wight,
James City, Northampton,
Southampton, York. Cities of
Chesapeake, Franklin,
Hampton, Newport News,
Norfolk, Poquoson,
Portsmouth, Suffolk, VA
Beach, Williamsburg

9. Petersburg United Way
Information and Referral
Box 227
233 S. Adams Street
Petersburg, VA 23804
Affiliations: VA State
College, VA and
Chesterfield County Welfare
Department

Jurisdictions Served: Counties
of Chesterfield, Dinwiddie,
Greensville, Prince George,
Surry, Sussex, Cities of
Colonial Heights, Emporia,
Hopewell, Petersburg

10. Prince William County
Information and Referral
9127 Euclid Avenue
Manassas, VA 22110
703/ 361-4131
Affiliation: Prince William
County Social Services

Jurisdictions Served: County
of Prince William

11. Richmond Information and
Referral Center
4001 Fitzhugh Avenue
Richmond, VA 23230
804/ 275-2000
Affiliations: United Way
Greater Richmond, Richmond
Department of Public Welfare,
Chesterfield County Social
Services, Henrico County
Department of Public Welfare

12. Roanoke Information and
Referral Center
512 Carlton Terrace Bldg.
920 S. Jefferson Street
P.O. Box 496
Roanoke, VA 24003
703/ 982-2345
Affiliations: Roanoke Valley
Council of Community SVCS,
Roanoke Department of
Welfare, Botetourt County
Department of Welfare

Jurisdictions Served:
Counties of Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, New Kent, Powhatan, Richmond

Jurisdictions Served:
County of Botetourt, Craig, Roanoke. Cities of Roanoke, Salem

These centers and other state and local referral programs will provide information on services available for the different needs of the homeless. The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development will assist in coordinating information referral of federal, state, local, non-profit and private programs and resources to assist the homeless throughout the state. The information referral will facilitate intergovernmental cooperation in providing human service assistance for the homeless.

There are eight localities in the Commonwealth of Virginia that are eligible for federal assistance as Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) Formula Jurisdictions. These Virginia localities are listed below:

Newport News
Norfolk
Portsmouth
Richmond
Roanoke
Virginia Beach
Arlington County
Fairfax County

The state government of Virginia will provide assistance in coordinating the various comprehensive homeless assistance plans with these ESG Formula Jurisdictions in the state. By working with other localities in the state and coordinating homeless assistance efforts, Virginia's homeless will be better served.

B. Recognizing the Special Needs of Certain Homeless Types

There is an interest in Virginia to recognize the special needs of the various types of homeless persons, particularly families with children, the elderly, the mentally ill, and veterans. Through the application process whereby shelters request funding from various state and federal assistance programs, the needs of these homeless individuals will be indicated. The state will provide information to shelters concerning various essential human services available for these homeless persons as well as distribute assistance funds to shelters with a high priority given to special population groups.

VI. HOW FEDERAL ASSISTANCE UNDER TITLE IV OF THE MCKINNEY ACT WILL COMPLEMENT AND ENHANCE AVAILABLE SERVICES

How Federal Assistance under Title IV will Complement and Enhance Available Services

A. Emergency Shelter Grant Program (ESGP)

This program provides assistance to the current efforts of many shelters in Virginia to achieve building and fire code safety compliance. The funding from the ESGP program will enable additional shelters to comply with the codes and maintain safe facilities. The ESGP assistance will also enable shelters to accommodate more homeless people, thereby lowering the number of persons that must be turned away. This program will be coordinated with state and local emergency shelter efforts to achieve these goals.

B. Supportive Housing Demonstration Program

1. Transitional Housing Program

This program will provide additional long-term housing opportunities in Virginia for persons who can achieve permanent self-supported living arrangements in a short period of time (30 days to 1 year). The program allows local case management efforts to assist clients in becoming self sufficient and thereby reducing homelessness. This program significantly enhances the efforts of Virginia shelters and localities in providing transitional housing for the homeless.

2. Permanent Housing for the Disabled

This program will enable Virginia and its localities to develop additional group home opportunities for providing permanent living accommodations for the mentally and physically disabled homeless. These group homes will provide the services and facilities needed by the disabled. Many disabled homeless persons in Virginia are currently among the "street people" in many localities. The federal resources provided through this program will be coordinated with state and local programs (including Virginia Housing Development Authority and State Mental Health and Mental Retardation programs) to provide appropriate permanent housing for this segment of the homeless population.

C. Supplemental Assistance

This program will enhance state, local, and private efforts as well as other federal programs in providing safe and adequate shelter facilities for the homeless. Initiatives for homeless facilities and services, including the assistance provided from this program, will enable many substandard shelters to meet building code requirements and provide safer housing for homeless clients.

D. Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation for Single Room Occupancy Facilities

This program will enhance state and local efforts to provide decent and affordable housing opportunities for very low income persons. Single room occupancy units will enable low income and homeless people to maintain a more permanent address, which in conjunction with various social and educational services provided through other programs, may provide an opportunity to improve their living circumstances and break the "cycle of poverty". Providing single room occupancy units in Virginia is an important component of a comprehensive homeless plan for preventing many very low income persons from becoming homeless. These SRO units will also provide needed housing for many currently homeless persons.

VII. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

JOB TRAINING DEMONSTRATIONS

Need for Job Training for the Homeless

Virginia's shelters for the homeless have reported that many of the homeless clients served lack any basic jobs skills. Some homeless people are referred to limited day-labor jobs. These jobs however are generally low wage and provide no security. Many of the homeless are not appropriate for the usually physically demanding day-labor jobs. Job training is therefore needed by many of Virginia's homeless persons to enable them to obtain decent jobs. In many cases, job skill training has provided the opportunity for a homeless person to break the "cycle of poverty" and become self supporting. Job training programs may contribute to a reduction in homelessness in Virginia by developing new opportunities for employment and self sufficiency.

VIII. Contact Point

For further information on the contents of the CHAP, all questions may be forwarded to:

Rebecca C. Miller, Program Manager
Department of Housing and Community Development
205 North Fourth Street
Richmond, Virginia

Phone: (804) 786-7891

IX. Coordination

The Department of Housing and Community Development intends to develop recommendations for the Governor's office to designate a person to coordinate homeless assistance efforts in the state of Virginia in order to centralize information gathering and dessimination, and establish of an interagency homelessness council for information exchange and policy development.

X. STATE CERTIFICATION

I, Neal J. Barber, Director, Department of Housing and Community Development in the State of Virginia hereby make the following certification and assurance to accompany the Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan with respect to the execution of responsibilities assigned to the State by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, as amended:

1) I certify that an information copy of the State's Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan has been provided to all Emergency shelter Grant formula cities and counties located in the State; and

2) I assure that the State and each recipient and project sponsor conducting activities, funded in whole or in part with McKinney Act funds, to assist the homeless population in this jurisdiction, will administer, in good faith, a policy designed to ensure that the assisted homeless facility is free from the illegal use, possession, or distribution of drugs or alcohol by its beneficiaries.

Neal J Barber

Neal J. Barber
Director
Virginia Department of Housing
and Community Development
205 North Fourth Street
Richmond, VA 23219

February 10, 1989

Background Information on State Housing Commission and Programs

Housing Study Commission

Background. In the 1970's an awareness of the need for adequate housing was just beginning to dawn. To help address this need, the 1970 General Assembly established the Housing Study Commission to "study the ways and means best designed to utilize existing resources and to develop facilities that will provide the Commonwealth's growing population with adequate housing." The Commission was further directed to examine all relevant provisions of Virginia laws to determine if such laws are adequate to meet the present and future housing needs of all income levels in the Commonwealth, and to recommend such changes in relevant laws as it deems appropriate.

Throughout the 1970's and early 1980's, the Commission, comprised of eight members of the General Assembly and three gubernatorial appointees, recommended legislation to advance its goal of "providing a safe, decent, affordable home for every Virginian." The legislation, among other actions, established a state office of housing, now the Division of Housing in the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD); the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA); and the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act; and the Uniform Statewide Building Code.

The Commission was dormant from 1983-1987. In 1987, the General Assembly recognized the increasing housing needs of the Commonwealth and reactivated the Commission. The Chairman, Delegate Alan A. Diamonstein (D-Newport News), appointed a broad-based group of housing experts to study key areas and solicit information on regional needs through public hearings.

The 1987 Study Commission. A recurrent theme emerging from the hearings and studies was the need for affordable housing. Thus, the main thrust of the Commission's recommendations to the Legislature was directed toward addressing the serious shortage of safe and decent housing at costs affordable to individuals and families of low and moderate income. This goal would be met by:
1) establishing a state housing fund, and 2) by appropriating funds for other general housing programs (to be awarded to applicants on a competitive basis).

The fund, to be known as the Virginia Housing Partnership Fund, would preserve existing housing units and produce new ones, and assist those with special needs, e.g., the homeless, in attaining housing. Allocations from the fund, to be disbursed in the form of no interest and low-interest loans, as well as grants, would be used to leverage private sector funding, federal and foundation assistance, loans from the Virginia Housing Fund and other programs of the VHDA, and local government and nonprofit sources. The fund was to be administered by the DHCD.

The Commission's 1987 annual report noted that "new temporary and permanent housing opportunities in Virginia could reduce the current homeless crisis facing urban and rural localities." The report identified 10 areas for Partnership Fund allocation, one of which was housing assistance for the homeless. Specifically, it recommended funding to:

- increase emergency shelter facilities;
- provide transitional housing facilities;
- offer single room occupancy units to serve as temporary or permanent housing and;

APPENDIX C

- supplement operating subsidies to assist the 65 existing emergency shelters in maintaining their present service capacity.

The Commission also proposed:

- expanding the Neighborhood Assistance Act of 1981 to provide state income tax credits as incentives for businesses to invest directly in community services or projects, such as housing for low income people and shelters for the homeless;
- offering citizens the opportunity to contribute funds to assist the homeless by establishing a state income tax check-off provision to assist persons with special housing needs; and
- convening a Governor's conference on housing to educate and coordinate those concerned with housing issues.

The 1988 General Assembly responded to these recommendations by establishing the $ 47.5 million Virginia Partnership Fund and the income tax check-off provision. It also appropriated another $400,000 for a matching grant program for existing shelters ($400,000 had been provided for the first time in 1987) and $750,000 for the expansion of shelters.

The 1988 legislature also mandated the Commission to continue its study of homelessness in Virginia and report on strategies for prevention.

1988 Study Recommendations and Rationales. The Commission reviewed current surveys and studies underway (including surveys by the Coalition for the Homeless and the Department of Planning and Budget and research by a professor at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University), collected supplementary information, and made five major recommendations.

1. Because economic dislocation caused by a temporary financial crisis such as unemployment is a major cause of homelessness inVirginia, the Commission recommended the development and implementation of an eviction and foreclosure prevention program. A program of this kind would address the loss of a primary source of income by an individual or family which often significantly reduces or eliminates a household's ability to maintain current housing payments. Temporary financial assistance enables many families to keep up their rent or mortgage payment until another source of income can be found and they can regain self-sufficiency.

Once a family becomes homeless, it becomes more difficult to find employment or other sources of income, and extensive public and private assistance is needed to restore the household to wholeness. In fact, it is estimated that the cost of meals and emergency shelter is $ 500 a month for a family. (This does not take into account the loss of taxable income or the added cost of public assistance and unemployment payments). Thus, assisting families to remain in their current housing may be much less expensive than expending massive resources **after** they have become homeless.

The 1988 VHSC annual report noted that other states have successfully prevented homelessness by combining existing programs and social services with eviction and foreclosure prevention assistance, and that this approach has potential in Virginia since many components of the program are already in place.

The Commission pointed out that the effectiveness of this program could be strengthened by including case management, landlord/tenant mediation, homeowner/mortgage holder negotiation, a housing search service, and emergency assistance.

2. A second recommendation to prevent homelessness involves assistance to those displaced by redevelopment. The displacement of tenants due to the redevelopment of multi-family rental units has become commonplace in the Commonwealth. The sale of low rent properties often increases the cost of housing beyond the means of the elderly, disabled, and low income people. In addition, the current tenants may be given little notice to vacate the property and no assistance in finding other housing.

When tenants are displaced by condominium conversions, they are protected by the Condominium Act. In addition, tenants may have protections through local government ordinances. However, tenants in rental units being upgraded have no such legal protections. The Commission, therefore, recommended that a subcommittee be appointed to review the need for possible legislation to address situations which cause such tenants to become homeless.

3. A third recommendation of the Commission was to develop a regional approach to address homelessness. Most local governments have not provided financial support for shelters or programs to assist the homeless, nor have they attempted to work together to resolve this mutual problem. The 22 Virginia planning district commissions (PDCs), which were created to provide a forum for neighboring localities to discuss matters of mutual concern, pool resources, and coordinate activities to address regional problems, could take the lead in regional coordination.

Because the shelters operated by private and nonprofit organizations currently use a regional concept of cost sharing for homeless facilities, the PDCs could use this concept to assist localities in developing and funding needed facilities and services within each planning district.

4. The Commission recommended the Code of Virginia be amended to include the raising and distribution of funds for the homeless as part of the PDCs mandate. This will formalize the process and encourage regional coordination.

5. Finally, the Study Commission recommended that the Virginia Bar Association establish a pro bono program to provide legal representation to the homeless.

To highlight the need for affordable housing in Virginia, the Commission took the lead in sponsoring, along with the DHCD, the VHDA, the first Governor's Conference on Housing in the Fall of that year. The Conference, which was co-sponsored by major private and public sector and nonprofit organizations, attracted some 600 conferees, and focused on housing finance and land use issues.
Homelessness was not to become a conference agenda item until the following year.

Recent Legislative Actions. The 1989 General Assembly acted on the Commission's recommendations. The most substantive action was the appropriation of over $1 million to HCD ($2.7 million had been requested by the Coalition for the Homeless) to begin an eviction and foreclosure prevention program. The demonstration program, to be established in eight localities, will include housing and job counseling for loan and grant recipients. Eligible program participants will include families who are facing eviction or foreclosure through no fault of their own, and can demonstrate a satisfactory rent/mortgage payment history.

The Legislature also allocated $156,695 to provide additional assistance to shelters for the homeless. In addition, it adopted a resolution which encourages planning district commissions to work with member localities to develop plans to provide for the needs of the homeless in their districts and regionally share the costs of assisting the homeless.

Finally, the Neighborhood Assistance Act, which was recommended for expansion in 1988, was amended in 1989 to: 1) extend the Act for five years beyond the 1989-90 sunset date; and 2) change the definition of qualifying "neighborhood organizations" to include public housing authorities. According to the HSC, theAct has been under-utilized in the past, and these changes may increase its use.

Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

The Department of Housing and Community Development was consolidated with several state programs in 1978 to assure a "coordinated approach to meet the housing and community development needs of the Commonwealth." The DHCD is organized into four areas; housing, community development, building regulatory services, and administration.

While the Department does not actually create housing units, many of its programs are aimed at preserving existing housing because it is less expensive to maintain than to produce new housing. The DHCD works with communities on housing activities. In addition to administering the Virginia Housing Partnership Fund, the Division of Housing provides technical assistance to localities on housing issues. For example, the Division of Housing assists localities in maximizing the opportunities provided by the award of federal block grants to rehabilitate poor housing.

The agency also administers the Small Cities Community Development Block Grants Program. These block grants are competitively awarded to communities for a variety of housing, economic development, public facility, and service activities.

The **SHARE Program** evolved from the initial efforts to fund shelters for the homeless. The 1987 General Assembly appropriated $400,000 to DHCD for shelter aid. To allocate the funds, the State Emergency Shelter Program (SESSP) was established. Soon afterward, the Virginia Shelter Grants Program was set up to distribute federal McKinney funds allocated through HUD. In 1987-88, the three grants totalled $696,000.

In 1988, the Legislature appropriated another $400,000 for SESSP funding in each year of the biennium and established the Virginia Partnership Fund. Part of these funds, $750,000, was set aside for each year of the biennium for grants to expand homeless facilities. In addition, the Fund included $2 million loan program for the same purpose. At the same time, HUD allocated another $432,000 in McKinney grants to projects in non-entitlement areas.

In the last year, the DHCD consolidated these homeless initiatives into the SHARE program. It now includes the Shelter Support Grant (the old SESSP), the Expansion Grant (the old Homeless Facilities Expansion Program), the Expansion Loan, and the Federal Shelter Grant (the old VSGP). Any new initiatives will be included in SHARE.

McKinney Act Program Descriptions for Which Virginia Receives Funds

HOUSING

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides grants to states for housing the homeless population.

The **Emergency Shelter Grants Program** provides grants to states, eligible cities, urban counties, and local governments for renovation, major rehabilitation, or conversion of buildings for use as emergency shelters for homeless persons. Funds can also be used for certain operating costs and social services. Nonprofit organizations may receive program funds through their local or state goverment.

About half the funds are distributed to local governments through the Community Development Block Grant-Small Cities formula. The balance is allocated to formula jurisdictions with a minimum allocation of $25,000.

The **Supplemental Assistance for Facilities Program** provides funds for discretionary grants to states, metropolitan cities, urban counties, tribes, or private nonprofit organizations to supplement emergency shelter grants and transitional housing projects. Alexandria City received almost $755,000 for supplemental assistance to the homeless in 1987. No funds are appropriated for 1988 or 1989, but the Bush budget proposes funding this program at $11 million in 1990.

HUD funds another program to provide housing and support services to homeless persons. The **Supportive Housing Demonstration Program** has two program components; the transitional housing demonstration program and the permanent housing for the handicapped program.

The program is targeted to homeless people who are deinstitutionalized, others with mental disabilities, and homeless families with children. Funds can be used to move homeless people to independent living by providing housing and support services.

HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Under the McKinney Act, **Mental Health Block Grants** are provided to states through the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration of HHS offers program funds for outreach services, mental health treatment and rehabilitation, case management, medical referral services, supportive and supervisory residential services, and staff training, including training of individuals who work in shelters, mental health clinics, and other sites where the homeless receive services.

Under the formula-based block grant program, funds flow to states for use in community mental health centers and to local programs providing services to chronically mentally ill homeless persons. States are asked to designate a state agency to administer the program. In Virginia, it is the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Funds are distributed to states according to a formula based on the proportion of a state's population in urbanized areas relative to that of the nation's population in urbanized areas. No state with an approved application will receive less than $275,000.

Through the **Community Mental Health Services Demonstration Project**, HHS and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), provides discretionary grants to community-based mental health services to the homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless. Through comprehensive local demonstration projects, services such as outreach, case management, treatment and rehabilitation, transitional housing, and staff training are provided.

Two, two-year projects were selected from state mental health agencies. The first involves demonstration projects for homeless adults with severe, long-term mental illness. The second provides funding for innovative demonstration projects serving severely emotionally disturbed homeless children and adolescents.

Funds are also allocated (by formula) to the states under the **Emergency Community Services Homeless Grant Program.** States distribute funds to eligible entities such as community action agency programs (CAAPs) that already provide emergency assistance to the homeless.

The HHS and the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HSRA) offers discretionary grants to support the delivery of health services to the homeless. The **Health Services Program** includes primary care services, drug and alcohol abuse treatment, and optional mental health services. Grants are awarded through a competitive application process open to public and private non-profit entities.

EDUCATION

The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) provides funds to enable state agencies to plan and implement programs for the education of homeless children. Funds for the **Homeless Children and Youth Program** are distributed on the basis of the Chapter 1 Basic Grant formula, which includes both the number of low-income children and the average state expenditure per pupil from the previous year. Each state receives a minimum allocation of $50,000.

To receive funds, state education agencies must assess and develop strategies to assure homeless children access to educationand submit a state plan. Plans include strategies to provide for the education of homeless children and to provide procedures to resolve disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children. In addition, each plan must ensure, to the extent practical under local education law, that:

- Local education authorities continue the education of the child in the original school district for the rest of the school year or place the child in the district he or she is actually living in, whichever is in the child's best interest;

- Each homeless child is provided the same services as other children;

- The records of each homeless child who is transferred to a new school district are available in a timely manner.

Adult Education Homeless Program. The DOE also receives money for adult education under the McKinney Act. The funds enable the agency to plan and implement a program of literacy training and basic skills remediation for homeless adults. Funds are distributed by a formula based on the number of adults (16 and older) in each state who do not have high school diplomas and are not currently enrolled in school. State education agencies receive a minimum of $75,000.

Through a competitive bid process, programs are funded to provide basic skills instruction. Grantees included a variety of private nonprofit organizations and local governments.

EMPLOYMENT

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) began soliciting grant applications for **job training demonstration projects** for the homeless in Spring of 1988. Grants are to be used for basic skills instruction, remedial education activities, basic literacy instruction, job search activities, job counseling, and job preparatory training, including resume writing and interviewing skills.

Under this competitive grant program, state and local public agencies, private nonprofit organizations, and private businesses may apply. Proposals for funding must be consistent with the state's Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan (CHAP) and must include: the number of homeless individuals to be served, the number of homeless people placed in jobs, the average length of training time, the average training cost, and the average job retention rate of placements after training.

In addition, the McKinney Act amended the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) to assist homeless individuals in obtaining employment and training services. First, it added the homeless to the definition of who are eligible for JTPA programs, in Section 4(8) of the Act. Second, it changed the requirements for proof ofresidency within the service delivery area if its job training plan permits services to homeless individuals.

FOOD

The **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** allocates program funds to Local Emergency Food and Shelter Program Boards. Funds are distributed to local boards based on a formula that includes the unemployment rate, total number of unemployed persons, total number of persons below the poverty line, and the total population. A portion of the funds are distributed to state set-aside committees for distribution to local boards. The local boards then allocate these funds to local nonprofit and government organizations using their own criteria.

Funds are used to supplement the cost of food for shelters and mass feeding facilities, small equipment, limited leasing of capital equipment utility, emergency lodging, and minor rehabilitation of shelter facilities.

The **Temporary Food Assistance Program** (TEFAP) reimburses the states for administrative costs of distributing surplus commodities. At the request of the governor of a state, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is required (subject to appropriations) to distribute surplus flour, cheese and cornmeal, and may distribute butter, nonfat dry milk, rice, and honey. In 1989, the Act was reauthorized under the Emergency Hunger Prevention Act of 1988.

Source: Excerpts taken from the National Governors' Association report, The Status of Stewart B.McKinney Homeless Assistance Act and Related Legislation, Updated March 1989.

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